THE LUCKIEST MAN ALIVE



LEE SHIPPEY

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by

LEE SHIPPEY

Being the Author's own story, with certain omissions, but including hitherto unpublished sidelights on some famous persons and incidents

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Sylvia Shippey Thomas
(Shippy)

I dedicate this book to the memory of the grand souls to whom I have paid tribute in its pages, without whose friendship and inspiration I might easily have been the unluckiest man alive.

L. S.

FOUR-WORD

A newspaper columnist's career gives him intimate personal glimpses of many famous folk, from whom he often learns their secrets of success. This is the story of the struggles and adventures of one columnist who won the friendship of many great figures in American newspaper, literary and dramatic life. It reads like romance, but what is told is true.

PAUL I. WELLMAN.

Part One

SUDDEN CHANGE

I DIDN'T WANT TO MEET THE train. I wanted to spend the afternoon at school, for I stood high in class and in the games we played on the school grounds. But Mother had said: "Your father wouldn't hesitate about going to meet you," and I knew that was true. Father never hesitated to put himself out when any courtesy seemed called for. Still, Father had been taking those trips to health resorts frequently the last two years and always before he had said goodby to us at home, just as he did before going to his office, had carried his bag himself and had come home the same way, loath to inconvenience anyone.

But this time Father had telegraphed from Colorado Springs: "Arrive home on 4 p.m. train Tuesday." Always before he had written, for telegrams cost much more than letters and a man with four children to educate couldn't be wasteful.

Father was thrifty for his family. Yet he never talked poor nor dodged any obligation. He had given my sisters advantages which Mr. Kamp, whose income was much

bigger, felt he couldn't afford for his daughters, and I knew he planned to do the same for me. So I grudgingly went to meet him at the railway station, four miles away by street car.

The train was nearly an hour late, and when it arrived I thought I had had the trip for nothing. The stream of passengers dwindled to one or two who moved slowly, then ceased, and Father had not appeared. I had never met a train before, and the embarrassment of ignorance made me wish to hurry away and report that Father had missed the train. I felt such a bumpkin that I stood irresolute, trying to nerve myself to ask the porter if he was sure that was the train from Colorado Springs, or the only one which was due at anywhere near that time.

Then I saw Father. He was walking very slowly and seemed hardly able to carry his suitcase. But he smiled at sight of me and said:

"Thank you, son. I'm glad to see you."

I reached for the suitcase and Father came down, one step at a time, holding to the guard rail as if he feared to fall.

"Are you all right?" I asked. He smiled reassuringly.

"Just very tired," he said. "It was a tiresome trip."

When he stood beside me he took my arm for support, and he bent so that he was no taller than I was. When he stood straight he was three inches taller, a little more than five feet eleven. But I accepted his statement that he was merely very tired and led the way to the street car. I had never been in a hack and did not dream of hiring one. It was a very slow walk to the street car.

There was one vacant seat and Father took it. But a few blocks farther on a woman boarded the car and

Father got up and gave her his seat. She took it, but then she looked at him keenly and arose.

"Oh, no, " she cried. "I mustn't take your seat. You're ill!"

Then I, too, searched his face and knew he was ill, despite his smiling reassurances. Father was a handsome man whose graceful body tapered from broad shoulders to comparatively small waistline, from strong hips to small feet. He had been a junior naval officer when the War Between the States began, but had been educated in Virginia and regarded himself as a Virginian. He had written out his resignation, left it in his cabin and decamped into Virginia, where he had become a cavalry officer on the staff of General J. E. B. Stuart. He carried himself proudly but never arrogantly, his habitual air being one of respectful deference with no hint of obsequiousness. I never heard him raise his voice but he spoke with quiet command when firmness was required. He never guffawed nor cared for humor which makes men guffaw but his friendly blue eyes and rather wide mouth smiled readily. His brown hair and sideburns had a reddish tinge and, being naturally curly, usually looked as if he had just come from a hairdresser's. In military academy he had been ordered to give his hair a hundred strokes every day, and he still regarded that as a duty.

But now I began to realize that the friendly blue eyes lacked luster and the reassuring smiles lacked conviction. Others noticed it, too. A man across the aisle arose to give his seat to the woman who wouldn't take Father's. Father thanked him and resumed his seat. I noticed then that all the persons around us were watching Father anxiously.

It seemed hours before we reached our suburban street. I helped Father get off the car, and the conductor helped, too. Our house, crowning a hill, was two blocks uphill from the carline. It took us more than half an hour to reach it. Before we reached it Mother and the girls ran out to us.

"Oh!" I heard Mother's stricken whisper, "I had no idea—! I shouldn't have sent a 15-year-old boy."

"You couldn't have sent anyone better," said Father, smiling. "He's stronger than any of you. I was mighty glad to see him."

"But he should have taken a cab."

"Don't worry, dear. I'll be all right once I get rested."

In my unseeing view, he almost made good on that promise. Supper was waiting and Father sat at the foot of the table. He made us laugh at descriptions of some of the queer characters he had seen at the Springs. Probably Mother was the only one of us who noticed that he could not eat. But after the almost happy supper it was a task for Mother and me to get Father upstairs.

We lived in a three-storied house with a castle-like turret rising from the one large room and bathroom which were the third floor, and since Father's health and been failing he and Mother had occupied that room because it was farthest from all the noises of the house. Father had to stop and rest many times before we climbed those flights of stairs. And once we were there Mother pushed me into the hall and whispered:

"Go for the doctor, fast. Your Father is very, very ill."

I could hardly believe it, but I hurried for the doctor. Soon the doctor told us there was no hope. Father was dying from a kidney ailment which modern surgery would

have ended with an operation long before. But in 1898 medical science could do little for it.

The doctor sat there, holding one of Father's hands. Mother knelt on the other side of the bed, holding the other hand, and all of us knelt, smiling at Father but praying in our hearts.

"God bless you all," whispered Father. A few minutes later the doctor said:

"He's gone."

The day after the funeral two business friends of Father spent all afternoon studying his accounts. After they left Mother called us children in.

"I'm afraid all of us will have to rearrange our plans," she said. "Your father left just enough to enable us to buy a small house—we cannot afford to rent this big one. Mr. Harmon and Mr. Bronson estimate that, after buying the house, we will have enough to live on, very modestly for about a year. By that time, they suggest, you two girls can have gone to business college and qualified as stenographers. In other words a year from now we shall have no income whatever except what you children can earn, and they tell me beginning stenographers usually are paid only about twenty dollars a month, so we shall have to be very economical. If our new home is big enough I can take in a boarder or rent a room."

"No," snapped my brother Stuart, who had a job in another town and did not live with us. "I'll postpone my wedding until things iron out, and can contribute more than you could get from a boarder."

That made me realize our private world was gone. Father had been treasurer of the Kansas City and Northwestern, a small railroad running through Kansas and Nebraska. That was a position of trust and dignity which

enabled us to live very comfortably. I had never dreamed that the girls might have to work.

Father had seen to it that all of us were provided with books which would interest us, and Mother had read them aloud to us before any of us could read, so we had grown up with love of books. My life had been planned for years. After college I would travel to romantic spots and then settle down to a literary career. But if Stuart felt it necessary to postpone his wedding, set for the next month, college seemed a fading vision. Even when the girls got jobs our income probably would be less than one-fourth what it had been.

"How about me?" I asked. Mother smiled sadly. I was in my first year at high school.

"I'm awfully sorry, dear," she said, "but I'm afraid you'll have to quit school—for awhile, at least. Mr. Harmon fears we shall need every cent we can bring in until the girls are established in positions. He says he can get you a job at the packinghouse which will pay you more than the girls are likely to make in their first jobs."

Suddenly, I felt, I had become a man, and must put away childish things. For some months I had secretly been sending what I thought were poems to New York editors, who promptly sent them back. I had never shown my efforts to my family nor anyone else I knew, but by mail I could submit them boldly to distant editors. Their failure to recognize my genius had baffled but not beaten me. But now, I felt, I must give up my dreams and start a new life as a packinghouse laborer.

EXIT VISIONS, ENTER HARD FACTS

I ARRIVED AT THE PACKING plant at six-thirty, having been told to meet Mr. Harmon there at six-forty-five. It was a cold, dark morning, but already a trickle of men was entering the plant, and on the loading docks, outside the plant, perhaps two hundred men were shivering. I saw Mr. Harmon on the dock and went toward him. He was standing on something which raised him above the crowd, so he could get a good view of all the men, and I did not intend to bother him until he wished to see me. He seemed to be studying the men about him and they seemed eager to attract his attention.

"What's he doing?" I asked a man on the edge of the crowd.

"Hirin' men," he replied, looking at me sympathetically. "In a plant which hires six thousand there's always some who were sick or drunk last night and don't show up. But I'm afraid there's not much chance for you, kid. He don't choose any but the big and strong."

"I think I'll get a job," I said, feeling lucky. Mr. Harmon had said I would. The man looked at me shrewdly and smiled bitterly.

"Maybe you will," he admitted. "If you're under eighteen you'll draw boy's wages—a dollar a day—but you look strong enough to do a man's work. So maybe he'll pick you instead of me—and I've got a wife and four kids to support."

"I hope we'll both get jobs," I said. "I have some people to support, too."

His face softened at that, and he said kindly:

"Then you better lie about your age, kid. Your foreman will sure as hell give you jobs as heavy as he thinks you can do, and you might as well get paid for 'em."

I grinned. I weighed 160 pounds and was the freshman most noticed in athletics. But Mr. Harmon already knew my age.

I had once seen a farmer selecting fat lambs for slaughter, and the scene on the dock reminded me of the way he had sized up the ones he selected. Mr. Harmon had a practiced eye for both faces and physical fitness. He wanted only the strong and willing.

Some of the men leaped and crowed with joy when they were chosen, I was surprised that men could be so glad of a chance to work hard for fifteen cents an hour. When I said so my new friend said:

"You wouldn't be if you needed a job as bad as some of us do. I have to come a long way, and walk to save a nickel carfare, and this is the seventh time I've come here. Every mornin' there's about the same number here, and every one of em would be home snuggled in a warm bed if he didn't really need the job. Yet it'll be a big day if more than seven or eight of all this crowd get jobs."

Mr. Harmon's glance fastened on me, but for a moment only. Then it swept on, and fear gripped my heart.

Five—six—seven men were chosen, and I began to feel sick. Then Mr. Harmon looked my way and signaled. But I wasn't sure he had signaled to me, and while I hesitated the man I had been talking to cried "Yes, sir!" and sprang forward.

"That'll be all this morning," snapped Mr. Harmon, but then his glance caught mine again. "Come here, young fellow," he said. I was one of the chosen, and it gives one a strange thrill to be one of the chosen.

My job was in the sausage-packing department up two ramps and perhaps 400 feet away from where the timekeepers checked me in. I had to be there, ready for work, by 7 A.M. As the little house Mother had bought was far from the plant I had to get up at five in order to take the trip by street car, shout my number—1252—to the timekeepers and get out of my decent clothes and into my work clothes before seven. If one were a single minute late in passing the timekeepers his early rising and his carfare would be wasted, for he would not be allowed to enter. We worked until five, with twenty minutes for lunch. Many of the men came in their working clothes and did not take time to wash or change after the day's work, eager to be among the first on the street cars—and when they boarded them they smelled so that other passengers sat as far from them as possible. Some of them were contemptuous of me because I arrived and departed in clean clothes. No doubt, like many a prejudice, that one was born of secret shame for their own ways, but it made some of the men I worked with shunt every mean job they could on me.

I'm afraid I deserved that,—for I was equally contemptuous of them, though I didn't think I showed it.

And I was very sorry for myself. There I was, a natural genius unjustly deprived of my rights by cruel Fate.

To my surprise, many kinds of sausage I had thought were imported were made in that plant and some were exported to Austria and Germany. Every day some tons of sausages would be packed in 25-pound cans which were put in crates—three cans to a crate—and trundled away by hand truck to a storage freezer or a freight car on the dock. The foreman, who resented me as a dudish kid, kept me busy trucking those crates away. On level ground it was not hard to push or pull a truck loaded with several times my weight, but stacking 75-pound crates on a truck and then lifting them off and stacking them as high as I could against a wall often made me sweat, though the temperature in the sausage cooler, where I worked most of the time, made all of us wear winter clothing all the year.

It was about half past six when I got home every evening and at first I was so tired I could not eat supper. I took a hot bath and went to bed, and Mother came in and rubbed my back with witch hazel and arnica, so I would be able to get up when the alarm rang next morning. For ten days I went to bed immediately after supper, and Mother rubbed my back. But I was ashamed to whine out of any job I was told to do, and once, at least, Fate came over on my side. The foreman ordered me to load a big barrel of oil on my truck and take it to a freight car. I had never loaded anything like that and went at it so awkwardly that the foreman jeered:

"Hey, Tucker, show the infant how to load his truck."

Tucker helped me get the barrel on the truck. He would have helped me more but the foreman snapped:

"Go back to your work. He should be able to handle it now."

I had to pull the barrel up a slight incline. One pulling a hand truck that is heavily loaded must not let the handles get higher than the precise level for balance. The barrel was so much heavier than I was that when I was halfway up the incline I stalled. Straining to start again, I let the handles get too high, and the barrel's weight asserted itself. Despite my frantic efforts, which made the foreman laugh, I was lifted like a boy on a seesaw.

With sneering curses, the foreman leaped forward, but it was too late. The barrel rolled off the truck and crushed one of his toes. He howled imprecations at me, but Tucker said:

"Stop pickin' on the kid. It was your own fault."

The foreman looked murderous but Tucker stared him down.

"Take over as straw boss," the foreman said. "I've got to see a doctor."

He limped away. Tucker called to a big, brawny man to take the barrel to the freight car. The foreman was absent for a week, and did not refer to the incident when he returned. But it meant a great deal to me. I knew Tucker needed his job, but he had not hesitated to risk it for me in the cause of justice.

I began to realize that some of the men I had been looking down on were heroes, gallantly enduring hardship and even debasement for the sake of those to whom they felt obligated. There was more chivalry in Tucker than in many a man who held a high position. For the first time I realized that in any sizable group of human beings, in any stratum of society, one finds all the human attributes, love and hate, nobility and treachery, cowardice

and courage, integrity and deceit—all the things of which books are made. Maybe, if I studied my fellow laborers, I could yet become some sort of writer!

Father had left a fine library, including beautiful volumes of Shakespeare, Byron, Wordsworth, Keats, Longfellow, Bryant, Sir Walter Scott and Victor Hugo. As I gave five of my six dollars a week to my mother and used 60 cents of the remaining dollar for carfare I had neither desire nor ability to engage in social pleasures, so I stayed at home and read great literature. Thus I came on Henley's "Invictus," and I doubt that a gift of $20,000 at that time would have done me as much good as did learning that poem by heart. A thousand times since then it has lifted me out of discouragement into action, and where there is action there is always hope.

I began trying to write something every evening, mentally reviewing the experiences and thoughts of the day. Had I done anything to be glad about or anything of which to be ashamed? And what had I learned from my associates? To this day I know of no better plan to make every day a step forward.

My awakening of the moment came when I realized that my friendly interest in my fellow workers changed my work from drudgery to teamwork and made them like me instead of resenting me. They admired what I did right and generously tried to help me with what I did wrong. It dawned on me that one can and should take pride in any honest work he does well, and that the only lasting satisfactions come from doing something worth doing well enough to merit respect. I became a happy worker and began to dream again, and some of the things I wrote seemed so good—to me, for I was too shy to show them to anyone I knew—that I sent them away to distant

editors. The editors returned them all, but one or two wrote encouraging notes.

Month after month, though, the rejections continued, and I grew depressed. I was sixteen now and as big as I ever grew to be. If I forgot all about writing poetry and concentrated on packing house work I might rise as Mr. Harmon had risen, and I wondered if that was not what duty demanded. With no more education than I had, could I ever hope to be anything but a laborer?

One Sunday afternoon I was mired down in such a mood when the doorbell rang. I opened the door and faced a man about ten years my senior.

"I'm looking for a boy named Lee Shippey," he said.

"I am he," I replied. He looked surprised.

"What did you say?" he demanded.

"I am he," I repeated.

"How old are you?"

"Sixteen—going on seventeen."

"Well, I think you're the boy I want. I expected you to say 'That's me.' I'm Webb Burrows, head proofreader on the *Kansas City Times*. We hire boys as copyholders, though mostly they are older than you. But my sister Marybelle tells me you read a great deal and know more about the English language than most boys do. Would you like to try it?"

A newspaper job! Oh, seventh Heaven! I all but swooned for joy.

"You bet!" I whispered breathlessly, sighing like a furnace.

"Wait a minute," he cautioned. "We pay only seven dollars a week."

"I'll take it."

"And it's night work—seven p.m. to 3 a.m."

"What, only eight hours? I can go back to high school!"

Burrows smiled. "You'll work seven nights a week," he said, "except that on Thursdays you won't have to report until 11 p.m. I don't think you'll feel much like going to school."

But I did. At three each morning I sped home on my bicycle, slept until eight thirty, dashed to high school on my bicycle in time for nine o'clock classes, and caught up on lost sleep on Saturdays and Sundays. I'll never forget the kindness of some teachers at old Central High School—Mr. Bainter, Miss Bain and Sophie Rosenberger. Years later Alexander Woolcott told me Sophie Rosenberger had inspired him to literary effort, and he had kept in touch with her all his life. He was a better man than I was about that, but I can never forget her eagerness to develop anyone who showed a spark of creative originality.

What counted in 1900, however, was that three wonderful teachers made an exception of me, permitting me to be tardy or to go to sleep in class without reproof, so that I could continue to get education I needed and they were eager to give. A mere smattering of grammar had changed me from a packing house laborer to a newspaperman and Fate must be on my side, after all.

THE DAY I RETURNED TO HIGH school, Professor Clifford Nowlin, much beloved in Kansas City, tried to inspire his class with a story of two young frogs that lived in a spring. A passing milkman upset a can of milk and sadly thought he would have to disappoint a dozen customers. Then he saw the spring, and was inspired. By scooping a couple of gallons of water into the can he would have enough diluted milk and need not disappoint anyone.

He acted hurriedly, fearing some passer might see him and fail to realize the nobility of his motive. Thus he scooped up the two frogs without seeing them.

The frogs found themselves in a dark place with no banks on which they might rest. They swam around and around the can, but were disappointed at every turn. They were equally capable, but finally one cried out that he must give up. "No, no, brother!" urged the other. "Nothing is as bad as it seems. Never give up!" But eventually the discouraged frog did give up, and sank.

Hopeless though the situation seemed, the other frog swam on. Finally the milkman opened the can and was amazed. He found that frog resting at ease on a pat of

butter churned by his own valiant efforts. He took the frog home, to live happily in his brook for many years.

That silly story has come back to mind ten thousand times since then. I like to recall it as I like to recall "Invictus," for no matter how gloomy things look it can always bring a smile, just as "Invictus" can always stir my fighting spirit. It brings back a flood of shining memories. Few of us ever appreciate as we should the teachers who try hard to make something of us, often with our antipathy rather than our co-operation. Often their influence on our philosophies and our careers is far greater than is that of our parents. Indeed, in many cases they are the parents of our ideas, and most of us fool ourselves when we imagine we are self-made.

Up to that time I had looked on teachers as natural enemies it was my duty to try to outwit. Now I recall with great affection the teachers who helped me get a little of the education I needed, especially Miss Rosenberger, who taught freshman English. As I had quit school in midterm to go to work I had to start again as a freshman. As I was bigger than any other boy in her freshman English class, I was ashamed of being only a freshman, and as I had been in school the year before I tried to create the impression that I was a sophomore in some other classes and a newspaperman taking a refresher course in that class. It was especially when pretty sophomore girls permitted me to carry their books that I shamelessly practised such deceit, and it was easy on the football field because I had been on the freshman team the year before. There I actually was a "second year man" though still a freshman.

Miss Bain taught rhetoric and had juniors and seniors in her classes, but when she learned I was trying to hold

a job and attend school simultaneously she made an exception in my case. I would swagger out of that class, often carrying the books of girls, but I dodged furtively out of Miss Rosenberger's class and hurriedly detached myself from all my fellow classmen, who seemed to me an exceptionally shrimpy lot.

Frankly, I was a very cheap snob. I felt a man who could impress the football coach should not have to be classed with mere children. But Fate was lying in wait for me again. In the first game of the season my right hand was injured so that I had to carry it in a sling. For a month Miss Bain and Miss Rosenberger made things easy for me. But Mr. Kelsey, who taught higher arithmetic—in which I was sadly weak—looked at my bandaged hand suspiciously. However, the football team was so pampered that Mr. Kelsey grudgingly excused me from all written work.

Then the school magazine came out with a picture of the football team on the cover, and I was not in the picture. Mr. Kelsey laid it before me and said accusingly:

"I thought you said you were on the team."

"I thought I was."

The night before the doctor had taken the bandages off my injured hand. Mr. Kelsey said:

"Let's see your hand."

I showed it. Mr. Kelsey sniffed:

"It looks perfectly sound to me. You've tricked me into letting you get out of work you couldn't do, for a month."

I was too hurt to make any defense. Mr. Kelsey took silence for admission of guilt. He reported my knavery to the principal, who sent for me. Again I was too humiliated to explain.

I should have defended myself. I had been on the team when I was hurt and my doctor could testify I had been hurt. Even with my arm in a sling I had reported for signal practice, and that afternoon I could again engage in scrimmage. But what was the use? The near-sighted old principal knew almost nothing of football. The fact that I was not one of the eleven men pictured was evidence the coach and captain did not consider me a member of the team. I wasn't making any progress on the newspaper and distant editors were scorning all of my inspired contributions. I might as well give up, recognize the fact that I had no chance, and go back to the packing house, where soon I could earn more money and not lose so much sleep.

"I played part of the first game and thought I was on the team," was all I said.

"But that was—let's see—thirty—thirty-five days ago. Beware of half-truths, my boy. Now go back to your class."

I went out, half resolved to go home and forget school. But that was Monday, and next Saturday the team would play the biggest game of the season. There was only a slim chance that I could get into that game as a substitute, for in those days the eleven men who started the game usually played every minute of both thirty-five minute halves. But even the slimmest chance woke visions. So I went to Miss Rosenberger's class, heartsick, humiliated, bitter but stubborn. No matter what Mr. Kelsey or the principal or anyone thought, I would stick in school one more week, then quit forever.

That day Miss Rosenberger read a myth and told us to rewrite the story in our own words. We had forty minutes in which to do it.

It was good to be able to write again. The story was poetic, and I could write verse almost as rapidly as in prose. I began to write verse and my personal troubles vanished. I was so absorbed I did not know it when Miss Rosenberger stepped behind me and looked over my shoulder. I was not there but on Olympus. But as I completed the task I was snatched back to earth, and what I had written was snatched by Miss Rosenberger.

"You're cheating!" she cried. "Maybe that's why you've been getting good grades all along! You've been writing things from memory and pretending they were yours!"

The class snickered. That was the last straw. To be laughed at by a shrimpy lot of freshmen and unjustly accused of passing off the work of others as my own was too much. I arose stiffly and stalked out of the class.

"Come back here!" ordered Miss Rosenberger.

I couldn't come back and let them see my eyes were beginning to leak. I strode on, out of the class and the school.

But I could always dream myself into glory. As I plodded away I began to dream that Billy Martin, the halfback who had won the last two games by brilliant runs, would be injured in Saturday's game and Substitute Shippey would be called on to save the day. Of course it was a baseless dream, like all my others, but it thrilled me so I decided to report for practice that afternoon. Maybe I would be expelled for ignoring Miss Rosenberger's order to come back. But I would stick until I was expelled.

Looking back after all these years, I can remember that day as my day of sorest trial. I did report for practice, but Coach Grady, who had been a star at Yale, ordered me to line up with the Scrubs. The first team was working

beautifully, and had no place for a man who had been out of scrimmage for more than a month.

Instead of going to the other end of the field, where the Scrubs were lining up, I withdrew to a corner to lave myself in misery. Why did I delude myself with false hopes that someday I would get a chance? Fate had marked me for persecution and humiliation!

I was brooding thus when Grady strode up to me.

"Why aren't you lined up?" he demanded.

"I'm quitting," I said. "I've never had a chance and never expect to get a chance. It's always been that way. I'm just unlucky."

"Only curs quit," said Grady. "Guys who hang on always get their chance."

I knew better than that. But I worshiped Grady. I could not let him think I was a cur. I walked away to join the Scrubs.

Next day I was late in entering Miss Rosenberger's class. I had to fight myself before entering it, half-expecting Miss Rosenberger curtly to send me to the principal, with the snickers of the class following me. My heart sank as I entered, for I could see that Miss Rosenberger had been watching for me. As I took my seat she rapped for attention.

"Before the whole class," she said, "I wish to apologize to Lee. Yesterday I accused him of cribbing, but I was mistaken. I am convinced that what he wrote was his own."

Gosh! That was big! But I was too stunned to say anything. I dared not trust my voice.

Friday Billy Martin did not show up for practice. Another boy brought word that Martin had a bad headache.

"But he'll be all right tomorrow," the messenger assured Grady.

Grady frowned but said nothing. He took me from the Scrubs to run signals in Martin's place. But I knew that meant nothing. No one could take the place of the great Martin.

Next afternoon the ball park was crowded for our big game of the year, and Martin was at his smiling, confident, powerful best. He was detained so by admirers outside the park that all the rest of the team and substitutes were in the dressing room ahead of him. As he entered, all of us gathered about him to pat him on the back. It was something merely to exchange greetings with a hero like Martin. "We're counting on you, Billy." "We're betting on you, Billy." "We know you'll do it again, Billy."

But Coach Grady snapped:

"Martin, turn in your jersey!"

It was a thunderbolt which left us gasping. But Martin did not gasp.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"Yesterday you sent word you were sick, and I checked on it. You were at the Orpheum matinee with a girl. No one who cuts practice the day before our most important game can play on my team. Shippey plays left half today."

Everyone was stunned. Everyone groaned. I was the first to speak.

"Oh, Coach," I begged, "I can't take Martin's place. Nobody can take Martin's place. Please let him play."

But Grady had spoken and that was the law. The few favored rooters who were allowed in the dressing room hurried out to cover their bets.

When we took the field there were groans and shouts

of "We want Martin." I longed to sink into the ground. But then the whistle blew and the game was on.

I don't know what happened after that. Two hours later I was shaken out of a dream. The captain and the coach seized me, lifted me to their shoulders and carried me off the field, amid such cheering as I had never heard before. They carried me to the box where the nearsighted old principal sat with other faculty members. The principal stared at me with surprised recognition.

"Why, my boy!" he exclaimed, "were you in this game?"

"He won it," said the captain.

"Why, Mr. Kelsey!" said the principal. "It seems this boy was on the team after all."

Maybe you think all this is unimportant. But the tragedies and crises of boys and girls—and the ways in which they are handled—may be the most important things in all the world to them. Coach Grady did something great for me when he said only curs quit. Miss Rosenberger did something wonderful to me when she apologized before the class. Mr. White, the principal, and Mr. Kelsey made me feel that generous people are always glad to see a fellow vindicated, and eager to help redress any wrong they have done him. Such things make an imprint on the malleable clay of youth which nothing can erase.

But next day, Sunday, I was horrified again. A column of school news appeared in the *Kansas City Journal.* It contained the "poem" I had written in Miss Rosenberger's class. She had thought it good enough for publication. It was the first time I saw myself in print, and that was a thrill until I read the introduction, which said:

"The following poem was composed by a freshman in one of Miss Rosenberger's English classes."

Thus I learned that crime doesn't pay. Just as it seemed my world was full of glory I was exposed as a deceiver. Once the pretty girl who let me carry her books out of Mr. Nowlin's class knew I was only a freshman she probably would scorn me. If I returned to school Monday it would be as a hangdog instead of as a hero.

THE *TIMES* WAS TOTTERING, about ready to fall into the arms of the strong young *Star*. It was because it was losing money that it employed boy copyholders instead of more experienced help, and reporters and editors resented the fact that their copy was handled by mere boys. They never came near the closet-like proofroom except to complain about errors which had got past us, and then they looked scornfully at me and the other copyholders. I had imagined that once I was on a newspaper I would get chances to write for publication, but my contacts with the editorial staff convinced me I would have stood a better chance as a packing house worker.

Yet I loved even that connection with a newspaper, and soon I loved the men I worked with. Burrows had never been to college, but proofreading had educated him as few college men were educated. Those were the days when editorials and special articles were full of classical references and quotations, and Burrows had a broader and more accurate knowledge of such things, as well as of public men and current and historic events, than any reporter I ever knew. The proofroom daily cor-

rected errors made by reporters and editors without telling them about it. But when we let errors pass they felt they were at the mercy of stupid kids. As two proofreaders and two copyholders were our entire staff, it frequently was necessary, in rush periods, to let us copyholders read proof and check corrections in revised galleys.

The other proofreader, Bill Fuchs, was a college man who, like me, had visions of writing when he got a job on a newspaper. He was a good fellow with a sound literary education, but he could not compare with Burrows as a proofreader. I realized it is not what a man has been taught but what he has learned so he can bring it to mind at the right moment which counts most.

But what counted still more was the human rather than the intellectual side of my fellow workers. Many a time Bill or Luke, the other copyholder, nudged me when they saw I was drowsing. Many a time Burrows growled: "My voice is tired. I'll read this one by myself. Take a nap, kid." And nearly every night, when we stopped for lunch at midnight, tough, redfaced Bill Parcell would join us. And pretty soon he would exclaim: "God damn it! My old woman always gives me twice too much coffee. Help me out kid, or I'll have to throw it away." They were all trying to help me keep awake, but none wished to be caught in an act of kindness.

The *Times* was absorbed by the *Star,* and I was out of a job. However, I had become a two-thirder proofreader. The *Journal* needed extra help Friday and Saturday nights, and the *World* needed extra help on Saturdays. By working Friday night on the *Journal,* Saturday on the *World* and Saturday night on the *Journal,* as a proofreader, I could make more money than I had made in

seven nights as a copyholder, and have more time for school—and for trying to write.

I was in my twentieth year when I finished high school. Two universities offered me inducements, as a football player, but I could not afford to accept them. I was earning twenty-four dollars a week then, and paying fifteen dollars of it to my mother, who needed it, for board.

Then Westport High School offered me a spare-time job as football coach, and I gladly took it. That was where I learned how grateful any kind of teacher is to those of his pupils who sincerely do their best for him. Soon I loved those boys so I was ready to suffer, sacrifice or fight for them. The school was very small then, and we had to compete with teams which had four times as many students to draw on, so we were always outmanned and outweighed. But my boys always fought like tigers, giving their best with such courage, fidelity and intelligence that after all these years I remember them with proud affection. Two dead-game but skinny youngsters in the squad were Wesley Stout and Sumner Blossom. Wesley later became editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, Sumner of *American Magazine*.

I had never had time nor money to get more than casually interested in girls. But one of the boys had an older sister named Margaret, and when I met her I fell in love. She was small and exquisite and poised and perfect beyond all my previous dreams. She was also out of my social orbit, being a society miss of twenty whose family was comparatively wealthy. But she was so gracious I did not realize that, and the day I met her I went home—please remember I was barely twenty myself—and wrote:

If this poor heart of mine could sing
The noble anthem of its love
The wing-ed seraphs, listening,
Would think the Angel Israfel,
Drawn earthward by love's mighty spell,
Had left celestial joys to fling
His heart out in one rhapsody,
One wild, enchanting harmony,
Which would the whole creation move
And through all time go echoing.

There were several stanzas, equally modest. Of course I did not send it to Margaret. I was far from being that presumptuous. But I sent it to an editor in New York, who promptly deflated my ego by returning it with a printed slip on which was scrawled the one word, "Gosh!"

I had a steady job now, six nights a week instead of seven, and though Margaret had far more eligible admirers I could usually date her for my night off if I spoke in time. By being thrifty all week I could afford to take her to the best entertainment in town, but frequently it was a narrow squeak. Once I took her to an amusement park, where we had such a glorious time I barely had carfare left to take her home, and after depositing her there I had to walk eight miles to my own home. But it was a happy walk, for I composed a poem to her as I walked. In fact, it became standard practice to go home and compose a poem to her after every evening I spent with her. She never knew that, for I could never show them to her until I made my mark. But if they seemed good enough I sent them away to those unyielding editors in New York.

A year went by and still I had not made a tiny scratch on the bulwarks of the embattled editors. That one printed

rejection slip with "Gosh!" scrawled on it was my only achievement.

Then one glorious day a letter of acceptance came from a New York editor. Sixteen lines of verse inspired by Margaret had sold. The letter said a check would follow in due course.

That was a great day. But I must not say anything yet. I must keep the great secret until the poem was published, or at least until the check arrived. I had no idea what a national magazine would pay for sixteen lines of verse, but hoped it might be enough to buy a diamond ring. Then, when the poem was published, I could show it to my inspiration—and of course she would know it had been written to her. And then, if it made her as happy as I dreamed it would, I could ask her to try on the ring for size.

Emboldened by that success, I thought the world would soon be mine. But my best suit was getting shabby and I had no savings to buy another. It was rumored that the star reporter on the paper got all his clothes from the city's smartest men's store in exchange for writing advertisements for it. If I could write for a New York magazine, surely it would be duck soup to write an advertisement. I was a devotee of art for art's sake, but a fellow had to be practical, too.

Schwartz the Tailor, who admitted he was the best, advertised "Perfectly tailored suits, $60—and up." The Grand Pants Company, less presumptuous tailors, advertised: "Pants $3.50 a Leg—Seats Free." I pushed romance aside to turn commercial. I composed these lines, which later had a great effect on my career:

We praise her doughnuts and her pies,
Her biscuits and her cake,

But where's the man who sighs for pants
Like Mother used to make?
She used to take a pair of Pa's,
When they were worn and frayed,
And decorate 'em with a patch
Of some contrasting shade,
And cut 'em off about the knees,
And take the waist in, too,
And say that they, for every day,
Were just the thing for you.
And then she sent you off to school,
And if you didn't go
She'd wonder what got into boys,
That they played truant so.
Yes, still we praise her jam, her jell,
Her coffee and her steak,
But where's the man who sighs for pants
Like Mother used to make?

I tried that on Schwartz the Tailor, but he was a one-art man. Then I tried it on the Grand Pants Company—but it didn't fit.

Margaret went away for several weeks, to visit the great cities I knew only by rejection slips. Ah, ha! I saw it all! Her stern parents were sending her away from the penniless young genius who had been hanging around for a year! But I would show them all when my poem was published.

But the check did not come. Weeks passed. Margaret would be coming home soon. I wrote the magazine a timid note of inquiry.

At last the answer came. But it contained no check. It was a brief announcement that the magazine had gone into the hands of receivers and the next issue would be

its last—and my poem would be returned in due time!

I was so crushed that even when I knew, from the society columns, that Margaret had returned I did not telephone her at once. But after a week or so I had quit thinking of suicide and such things, could smile at recollection of Professor Nowlin's story of the frogs and take heart from "Invictus." Then I telephoned to ask if I might call.

When I called she said:

"I'm so glad you came. It isn't announced yet, but I wish you to be the first to congratulate me."

She held out her left hand. On the third finger was a diamond ring far bigger than many poems could have paid for. I bent over the hand and kissed the ring for luck.

People laugh at puppy love. But what else fills so many young people with the most beautiful aspirations they have ever known? It did not accomplish any miracle for me. But it did inspire me to write something an editor had accepted, even though it had not been published. And that letter of acceptance was the one sustaining thing I had just then.

ONE LAST EFFORT

AS I WAS FOREVER THROUGH WITH girls, and my football days were over, I took up smoking. I would turn my back on the world, which misled me only to trick me, and devote my spare time to reading the philosophers, some of whom seemed almost as wise I was.

We are inspired to many actions, good or bad, by our admirations. We had a local stock company which was so good that several of its members rose to prominence, Emma Dunn as leading lady with Richard Mansfield, Wallace and Noah Beery and others in Hollywood. But the one I admired was Wilson Enos, who had played Cyrano and smoked Perique in a pipe!

A friend of mine owned the soda fountain, candy and tobacco shop in the Auditorium Building, and there I saw my hero fondling his pipe and buying tobacco. If such a genius smoked a pipe I would smoke one, too. Maybe the spur of my impulse was a desire to rub shoulders with the great man who was leaning against the counter. I stepped up beside him and said to my friend, who had served him:

"I think I'll buy a meerschaum pipe, Earl." I knew nothing of pipes, but understood that meerschaums were

expensive and classy. I couldn't ask for anything cheap at that moment.

I had seen Enos in there several times, but he had never seen me. Now he looked at me with interest and dawdled to watch my selection. Earl showed me two pipes, each priced at ten dollars. That seemed to me an awful price, and I hesitated.

"If you'll permit a suggestion," said Enos, "I like this one."

I had been spoken to by my hero! That was worth a few dollars.

"Thanks so much," I said. "I like it, too. I'll take it, Earl."

Even then the great man lingered, so I turned to him and said:

"I believe I heard you buying Perique." The fact was that Earl had told me Enos was the only man he knew who smoked straight Perique.

"Why, yes," admitted Enos, evidently pleased to know his oddity was being noted. "Wonderful stuff. You know, it's grown only in Perique Parish in Louisiana. Little too strong for most people, but I like it."

"I'll try some, too, Earl," I said grandly. "If Mr. Enos likes it I'm sure it must be good."

"You know," said Enos chummily, "if you put a chamois-skin jacket on that pipe, and clean it every day with wood alcohol, it will color so evenly and beautifully that every other meerschaum owner will envy you."

"Thanks a lot. I'll do it."

I procured chamois-skin and a pint of wood alcohol. My mother sewed the chamois-skin jacket about the bowl so neatly it looked like part of the pipe. That was not easy, for a carved eagle-claw supported the bowl, but my

mother always found time to do things carefully and patiently. She was so unselfish that all of us imposed on her without knowing it, and neither did she.

Then I settled down to smoke Perique—and it almost took my head off. After three days I decided that anyone who smoked straight Perique might be a genius but did not have good sense. I got milder tobacco and smoked it assiduously, bent on the great achievement of coloring my pipe beautifully. And every day, after smoking several times, I would fill the bowl with wood alcohol, let it run out through the stem and then run a pipe cleaner through the stem.

Working nights, I slept until nearly noon and smoked and read, or smoked and wrote, nearly all afternoon. When things I read impressed me, I would pause to mull them over and often wrote down the results of such musings. I rejoiced in reading anything which planted seeds in my mind which would sprout into ideas of my own when I stopped to ponder. And, like Tennyson, I smoked while I pondered.

The smoke tasted a little odd, but I thought nothing of it, for I heard new pipes had to be broken in. After three weeks I began to suffer from headaches.

I had never had headaches before, but my father frequently had suffered from migraine, and I ruefully thought I had inherited a tendency. Father's headaches had made him very ill, but for a day or two only. Mine, however, got worse as days passed. I thought I must be suffering from eye strain. I would have to read less, saving my eyes for the work by which I earned a living. That gave me time to write more—and smoke more.

The headaches became almost incessant—and the things I wrote all came back. I had to keep working, for

I was the main support of the family, and it looked as if I could not continue working as a proofreader. I could go back to the packing house, which paid much better wages now, and get a job which would be no strain on the eyes. I might as well give up my dreams of writing and make the regaining of health my important goal. It was a bitter decision, but it seemed the only thing to do.

The only way to do it was to destroy my manuscripts, as Cortez burned his ships. They had been misleading will-o'-wisps long enough. I had hundreds of them by now—bits of verse, aphorisms, anecdotes, short stories. I loved them, but they were the things which were destroying me. Vengefully I dumped them out of the trunk in which they were hidden—I still had never shown them to those near and dear to me. I would burn them all and end that dream.

But I was like the poetic baker in "Cyrano." I could not destroy them without taking one last look at them. And when I reread them I could not part with them.

The newspapers and printing houses in Kansas City had a baseball league of their own. I played first base on the *Times* nine, with Columnist Bide Dudley on second base and George Creel at third. I had heard that a New York paper had offered Dudley a job and his job on the *Times* would soon be vacant. I determined to make one last effort before destroying my dreams. I made up a sample newspaper column of the pieces I thought were my best and took them to the *Star* offices, where the *Times* also was published now.

I knew the way to the composing room but had never been in the editorial offices. I was so shy about showing my work to anyone that I had to walk to and fro, like a

picket, in front of the *Star* offices before I found courage to go in.

I knew that the editorial room was on a sort of mezzanine, up a short flight of stairs from the entry. I did not know that the classified advertising department was on the same floor. With thumping heart and apologetic blushes, I forced myself up the stairs. Through an open door I saw a desk behind which sat a man wearing an eyeshade. That must be one of those wonderful creatures I knew only by repute, an editor. Resolving to speak boldly, I pushed myself up to the desk, laid my manuscript before him and said:

"C-c-could you print anything like this, sir?"

He studied the manuscript, frowning. Finally he said:

"Well, yes, we *could*. But it would cost you seventy-five cents a line."

My blunder almost made me hang my aching, throbbing head against the wall. But I thought of "Invictus."

"W-where do I find the—the editor?"

The man smiled sympathetically—God bless him! Had he smiled scornfully my resolution would have died.

"Go to that corridor," he said, pointing. "Turn left and go to the last door, marked 'Associate Editor.' There you'll find Mr. Alexander Butts. He's the man for you to see . . . He's very kind."

I longed to flee and forget it all. But I followed directions and found the door marked "Associate Editor." I knocked but there was no response. I could flee now and feel I had really tried. But it was a do-or-die. I turned the knob and walked in.

The office was empty and courage revived. I took a piece of copy paper from the desk and wrote:

Dear Mr. Butts:

If your columnist moves onward and upward, maybe you can give me a chance at work like his.

I signed my name and address, tucked the note in the manuscript and hurried out.

Next day I met the postman at the corner, hoping for a letter offering me a job. All I got was another rejection from New York. Next day it was the same, and the same every day for a week. Then I gave up. The manuscript had been pencil-written and no return postage was inclosed. Clearly Mr. Butts had thrown it in the waste basket.

Still I could not give up and return to the packing house as long as there was the thinnest thread of hope. If Butts was really a kind man he might return my manuscript or write me a brief note. I kept on working and hoping, but the headaches made it hard to do either. I did not go to a doctor, for I had never thought of headaches as illness, and the corner druggist had many infallible remedies. One after another completely failed to give relief.

A day came when I felt so hopeless I wished to die. I had not been able to sleep, except by fits and starts, for two weeks. But I had to report early that evening, and I needed the money.

When I got to my desk my eyes blurred continually. I had been working an hour when the composing room foreman stormed into the proofroom, holding a proof in which I had let a glaring error pass.

"Only a fool would let that get by!" he raged. "What's the matter with you?"

"I don't know."

He bent close and stared into my face, sniffing my breath.

"You've either got one hell of a hangover or you're Goddamned sick," he decided. "Get the hell out of here—and see a doctor."

I tottered to my feet, got my coat and swayed out of the office. I could not understand why everything looked blurred. A strange haze seemed to fill the air, making everything indistinct. But I knew the neighborhood well. There were some doctors' offices in a nearby building, and across the street and a few doors from the corner was an osteopath's office. Those fellows, I thought, should be able to do something for eyestrain.

I started across the street and was startled by a screech of brakes. A motor car I had not seen almost ran me down. The driver cursed me for a drunken fool. I felt the fault was his, that he should not have been driving fast in such a fog, but did not stop to argue.

The medical doctors' offices were closed, but the osteopath's office was open. I entered it with the announcement:

"I've got a bad case of eyestrain. Can you do something for it?"

The osteopath did things to my neck and my spine which were bewildering to me. But he took away the headache, which was wonderful.

"What causes all this fog?" I asked.

"Fog?" said the doctor. "H'm! . . . There's no fog . . My assistant will see that you get the right street car for home. I think a good night's sleep will fix you all right."

I could not read the signs on the street cars, but the assistant put me on the right one. When I got off at my street the fog was even worse. My mother's house was almost lost in it, but it was only four houses from the car line. When I got home I went to bed at once, hoping to get to sleep before the headache returned.

I slept soundly but was awakened by a noise in my room. It was pitch dark. I sat up in bed.

"Who's there?" I demanded.

My mother's voice answered.

"What in the world are you doing in here, in the middle of the night?" I asked fretfully.

"I came to see why you don't get up. It's been broad daylight for hours."

I was totally blind.

A famous oculist was called. He called in three other doctors. All were puzzled. They gave me a dozen tests, but none revealed the cause. Finally the oldest doctor asked:

"Have you been using wood alcohol in any way?"

"No . . . Oh, yes, I've been using a little, to clean a pipe."

"That's the damnable stuff!"

That was before the days of prohibition, and cases of wood alcohol poisoning were rare. Only the oldest doctor had ever seen a case of it before, and then he had been called immediately after two soldiers on a spree had drunk the stuff. But all the doctors knew it was deadly to the optic nerve.

They got the pipe and examined it. They discovered that one of the eagle-claws supporting the bowl was hollow and a small hole from the bowl let it fill with wood alcohol every time I had filled the bowl with it. For weeks I had been sipping it as I smoked, so little at a time that I did not taste it.

The hollow claw would hold half a teaspoonful of the poison and the aperture to it was so small that little of it would evaporate. When the doctors estimated how much

of it I must have absorbed one of them laid a hand on my head and said:

"My boy, it's only fair to tell you that there is only a remote possibility you can ever see again."

When the doctors left my sister Virginia came in. Virginia was the beauty of our family, who wore her tender heart on one sleeve and her flashing temper on the other. One or the other continually got her into trouble, but when her sympathies were touched she was angelic.

"Would you like me to read the humor column?" she asked brightly.

"Sure," I answered, trying to speak as brightly.

But when she began to read I grew bitter. I thought it was a trick, to cheer me. At last, I thought, Butts had returned the manuscript I thought he had thrown away and she was reading it to me, pretending to read it out of the paper.

But I could hear the newspaper rustle. She really seemed to be reading it from the paper. Still I could not believe it, and when she finished I said accusingly:

"You didn't really read that out of the paper."

"Of course I did. What do you mean?"

"I mean it was all my stuff—the whole column!"

Blind or not, it was the most thrilling instant I can remember. It seemed that the dream of my life had come true. Fate, which I had always thought my enemy, was convincing me there is no such thing as wasted effort. Chance, which had seemed to lie in wait to wreck my hopes, was choosing my hour of deepest gloom to make the brightest of them come true.

Reason told me sudden illness or accident or loss of copy must have compelled Butts to seize on whatever

was at hand to plug a hole. But it might be that the columnist had left sooner than was expected.

"Go telephone the *Star*—Mr. Alexander Butts, associate editor," I ordered. "Tell him that I have a—a number—of other manuscripts, and if his columnist is ill I can fill that column for several days.

Virginia ran to the phone and got Butts on the wire.

"I'm the sister of the young man whose pieces you used to fill the "Tidings of The Times" column this morning," she said. "He wants you to know that if your regular columnist is ill he can fill the column for several days."

"H'm! . . . Why doesn't the boy speak for himself?' She told him.

Butts had never heard of me until he found that manuscript on his desk. He had not read the penciled copy then, but had been too considerate to throw it away. He had thrust it into his desk, to give it back in case I called to ask for it. He might never have read it had not his regular columnist suddenly become ill. Then the verse about the pants that mother made had amused him. But to him I was still only a stricken stranger out in the dark. He pondered a moment, then said:

"Surely. Tell him to keep right on. It may take his mind off of his troubles."

For four months I dictated the column from my bed, for the poison had nearly killed me . . . But I was the happiest youth in town, for I was too absorbed in my work to give much thought to my eyes. And both friends and strangers were so kind I came to feel I had never seen humanity aright until I lost my sight.

Then a little dim vision returned and I was able to be led downtown to meet my benefactor for the first time. I learned, by accident, that the real columnist had been

ill only one day—the day he had to be ill to save my life. He had been back at his desk when Virginia had telephoned Butts to say I could keep the column going a few days if the columnist was ill. Butts had told him to take a vacation, on full pay, and all that time had been paying me out of his own pocket—just to take my mind off my troubles.

BOTH BIDE DUDLEY AND C. L. Edson moved on to columnist jobs in New York, and I fell into a columnist's job on the *Star*, writing the "Tidings of the Times" column for the morning edition, the "Times," and the "Missouri Notes" column for the *Star*. And daily I was impressed by the eagerness of people in general to help a handicapped worker get along. Not only did my fellow workers continually tell me amusing things to put in my columns but such strangers as Walt Mason of Emporia often contributed good copy.

I could get around by myself now, but could not see well enough to read and had to ask others what street car was coming. It seemed that everyone who learned of my problems wished to help. One was Joel Ferris, perhaps ten years my senior, who thought he was going blind a few years before. A St. Louis specialist had told him the only doctor who might save his sight was in London. Ferris had gone to London to consult that famous specialist and all he had been told was to go to bed at the same hour every night, stay there at least eight hours, eat three simple, wholesome meals daily at the same hours and

stroll about outdoors, getting all the gentle exercise he could.

"That should give you good appetite, help you digest good food and benefit your entire nervous system," the great doctor had said. "But be sure to go to bed at the same hour, get up at the same hour and eat at the same hours. If you can't sleep, drink a bowl of hot milk. Don't get up and get it. Ring and have one of the servants bring it to you. That's all."

And that really had been all. No medicine, no treatment. Ferris had never seen the doctor again. But he had followed directions and regained not only his sight but his health, besides learning grand, gloomy old London better than many Londoners knew it.

My doctor had almost the same ideas, and Ferris came night after night to walk with me, as it still was not safe for me to walk about alone at night. That was a lot of time for a rising young man to give to a boy he had barely known, but it did not interfere with his rise. He went on to become one of the outstanding bankers of the Pacific Northwest. In those early days his delightful sense of whimsy gave me many an idea which brightened my columns.

We on the *Star* in those days were pretty cocky and proud of our organization. It had developed the budding talents of Alfred Henry Lewis, William Allen White, Leigh Mitchell Hodges—who had saved the Anti-Tuberculosis Christmas Seals effort from dying with a story that brought it to national attention—and a dozen others who had won note as writers or editors. Its cubs while I was on it included Ernest Hemingway, George Creel, Courtney Ryley Cooper, Jerome Beatty, Sumner Blossom Wesley Stout and, a little later, Paul I. Wellman . . .

Charles H. Grasty of the *Baltimore Sun* had written a magazine article calling the *Star* "America's greatest newspaper" and an editorial in *Life* had credited the *Star* and the *Springfield, Mass. Republican* with having a greater hold on their constituencies than had any other newspapers. To all of us, the proof of that was the fact that the *Star* had supported Hadley, Republican, for Governor of Missouri, which was overwhelmingly Democratic, and Hodges, Democrat, for Governor of Kansas, which was overwhelmingly Republican, and both had been elected.

To my mind, the main reasons for those achievements were the greatheartedness of Butts and the merciless editing of T. W. Johnston, Jr., the editor-in-chief. Butts was a bachelor who became almost a father to every cub reporter and office boy. His only fault as an editor was that he was too kind. But, as William Allen White once said to me, no one could work under Butts without forever after bearing his impress on his heart. Johnston, on the other hand, was reputed to have ice in his veins. He was a tall, thin man who was always formally courteous but to most of us there seemed no warmth in his courtesy. I remember him, though, as the greatest editor I ever knew.

I worked under Butts for a short while. Then Butts became ill and I worked under Johnston. The first time I entered Johnston's private office he was in conference with William Rockhill (Baron Bill) Nelson, owner of the *Star*. My vision was so fuzzy I did not see I was interrupting an earnest if not heated discussion into which I should not have poked my nose. But when Johnston saw me he turned, reached for my copy and said: "Thank you, Mr. Shippey." Butts always called me by my given name and

greeted me with a fatherly air, but never thanked me for doing what I was being paid to do.

Next morning only half of my column appeared. Johnston had blue-penciled all the rest.

I was almost in panic. Butts, I thought, had given me a job out of sympathy but Icicle Johnston had no sympathy. Probably he was ready, in his formal way, to say: "Goodbye, Mr. Shippey."

But he did not. When I handed in my copy that day he again said, "Thank you, Mr. Shippey." No word of criticism. Next morning, however, my column again was only half a column.

The third day it was almost as bad, and I thought I saw the handwriting on the wall. If Johnston would only criticize or make suggestions, as Butts would, I could stand it. But his cold ignoring of the subject seemed to me to suggest contempt.

The fourth day desperation made me speak. If I was to be fired at the end of the week I might as well know it.

"I see you think a lot of my stuff is pretty poor," I said.

Johnston smiled a very little, and I braced myself for the axe.

"Oh, no," he said. "It's not bad. But some is merely ordinary. Everything on the editorial page of the *Star* should be superior."

That was vaguely comforting. It implied that some of my stuff was superior. But it made me wonder if I could ever measure up to Johnston's standards.

I had been filling my Monday columns with single narratives in verse or prose. I had come on an Indian legend which explained the name of a little town nearby, yet was unknown to most of those who knew the town, as the Indian name had been Anglicized by pioneers before

there was a town. I wrote the story in verse and handed it in with a sense of challenge. Johnston could not kill part of that without ruining it, and if he killed all of it, I felt, I would be through.

Monday morning I looked eagerly for my column. Though I could not read it I could see well enough to recognize it. But it was not there. For the first time since Bide Dudley had started the column, four years before, the column space was filled with something else.

That was the end, I thought. Was it up to me to resign, after such a humiliation? But I could not afford to resign, unless asked to do so. I dolefully prepared another column, though I expected the axe to fall when I offered it to Johnston. However, all he said was, "Thank you, Mr. Shippey."

I waited expectantly, but he said no more.

I said: "I see you didn't care for my Indian legend."

"Why, no. I did not think it up to standard."

I gulped. "It's a good story if I tell it right," I said. "May I try again?"

"Certainly." He reached to a corner of his desk and handed back my rejected copy. I was surprised to see he had not thrown it away.

All that week, after finishing my regular stint, I worked over that Indian legend. Saturday I again handed it in for Monday. But Monday morning my space was again filled with other matter.

I was in the depths of humiliation, but doggedly did my daily stint. When I handed it in I got the usual thanks, no mention of the column which had failed to appear.

"I see you still don't like my Indian story," I said.

"No. I still don't think it up to standard."

"Well, I'm like General Grant. If you'll let me, I'll fight it out on this line if it takes all summer."

Johnston smiled and handed back my Indian story. I tore it to pieces and threw the pieces in his wastebasket. I would rewrite it in toto, changing the meter so I would not be tempted to use a line of the original.

When Saturday came I turned in the rewritten story, but also another column made up of jokes, jingles and paragraphs.

"If the Indian story is still no good," I said, "here is a substitute for Monday."

Monday morning I opened the paper with my heart pounding, but it went down like a runaway elevator. Neither the Indian legend nor the substitute column was in my alloted space! I dropped the paper with a groan.

My sister Louisa came to read me the paper. She opened it to the editorial page, and then she murmured sympathetically:

"Oh, they've left it out again!" Then, after a moment she added consolingly: "I guess it's just been crowded out by a big poem, played up in the center of the page with an art head . . . Why, it's *yours*! It's signed in big letters!"

Then I realized what Johnston had done for me. He had made me do my best instead of something merely passable. He had made me realize a story, like an egg, is no good if it is only nearly good.

The greatheartedness of Butts, the editorial integrity of Johnston and the system they set up inspired all the cubs of that period with an esprit de corps which made many of them rise to distinction as authors, magazine editors and newspaper editors. A man given an assignment practically lived his role, as would an actor.

Since then I have known many famous reporters and war correspondents—Irvin Cobb, Floyd Gibbons, Frazier Hunt, William Slavens McNutt and Alexander Woollcott of World War I, Robert Casey, Eddie Doherty, Virgil Pinkley, Don Whitehead, Robert Miller, Hal Boyle and many more in World War II—but the greatest natural born reporter I ever knew was A. B. MacDonald of the *Star*. MacDonald was sent to Oklahoma to cover the chase of Harry Starr, a bandit who rode safely through a surrounding posse because his sweetheart was on the horse with him and the possemen were too gallant to shoot. MacDonald's daily reports were picked up by wire services and got the whole nation excited. "Mac" returned from that assignment with a gun on his hip and the swagger of a posseman.

Next he was assigned the task of interesting Kansas City in Billy Sunday, the managing editor hoping that a big revival might start the ball for a municipal cleanup. "Mac" flung himself into the effort with such fervor that Sunday declared the revival was his greatest success and offered MacDonald twice his newspaper salary to take a leave of absence and go to New York with him as his publicity man. In New York, "Mac" not only got surprising publicity for Sunday but preached in Sunday's place when Sunday went to Albany to address the Legislature. And he preached with such effect that those who wished to hit the sawdust trail had to stand in line.

"Mac" also was one reporter who really did what radio reporters do every fifteen minutes. He solved a murder mystery, rescued an innocent man from prison and brought a guilty man to justice. For that achievement he received the Pulitzer Prize.

THROUGH THE KINDNESS OF friends and strangers who reported many amusing and interesting incidents to me, my column did so well that Butts, who had returned to duty, promised me a raise for Christmas. However, Christmas passed and my pay remained the same. I let two months go by before I screwed up courage to ask why.

"I'm sorry," said Butts, "but the business manager vetoed the idea. You're much the youngest man on the staff who is writing featured material. The business manager feels that a raise for you would create discontent among men who are older both in years and in service."

In my youthful arrogance, I felt I was the one who had a right to discontent. As Missouri Notes editor, I had represented the *Star* at two meetings of the Missouri Press Association and become very friendly with a lot of country editors. One was Jule Coe, a tall, handsome, genial man who vowed that the country editor led the most independent life on earth. Coe wore good clothes, carried shiny suitcases, put up at good hotels, drank the best of whiskey and smoked the best cigars. Every summer he vacationed in Colorado and apparently had gone to

Washington to attend two or three Presidential inaugurations. As I had never been more than two hundred miles from Kansas City, and had always yearned to travel, it seemed to me that Coe must lead a life of unworried prosperity and ease.

I also thought that if the *Star* feared it might lose my invaluable services alarm would shake the organization to its foundations. It had lost Dudley and Edson, both then featured in New York newspapers, and if it lost Shippey it might as well throw in the sponge.

"I've been thinking," I said, "of buying a country newspaper, as William Allen White did."

To my surprise, Butts did not seem alarmed.

"Confidentially, my boy," he said, "I think that a wonderful idea. I have often wished I had done it. Bill White and many others who used to work for me have done it and become far better known than I am. You have a lifetime job here if you want it, but if you see a really good chance to pick up a country paper you will be doing just what many of us wish we had done."

"I had nothing immediate in mind," I said hurriedly. I would have had to borrow to raise twenty-five dollars.

A few days later, though, I got word that Jule Coe was ill in a Kansas City hospital. I visited him and he talked glowingly of the most independent life on earth. A few days later Coe died, and I heard that his paper could be bought cheap.

Naturally, I talked at home of what Butts had said and of the great opportunity I could seize if only I had some money. With the romance of youth, I saw the opportunity I was losing as fishermen see the fish that get away, a shining prize which should be mine. There was more

drama in seeing it as wonderful. So I was almost shocked when my mother said:

"Why don't you investigate? I could mortgage our home for enough to swing the deal."

The paper was the *Higginsville Jeffersonian,* published in a coal-mine town of twenty-eight hundred inhabitants, only fifty-five miles from Kansas City. I went to see it and was bewildered. The plant was so run-down that I could buy the equity of the Coe estate for three hundred dollars, if I would assume some fifteen thousand dollars in mortgages and debts.

"Jule really led a wonderful life," explained the foreman, "and you can, too. It isn't customary here for an editor to pay cash for anything except liquor. When you want clothes, buy 'em and charge 'em. Every merchant has to have advertising and printing now and then, and they all expect to take such accounts out in trade. You carry cards for doctors and dentists and take that out in trade, too. You get thousand-mile mileage books in exchange for railroad advertising. As we have two railroads, that normally amounts to about six thousand miles a year. You can run advertisements for hotels in the cities you visit most, in exchange for due bills."

"But Coe always seemed to have plenty of cash, too."

"So can you, if you're as smart as Jule was. Once you really know these people you'll know all those who have political aspirations. Suppose you want to go to Washington to see the President inaugurated. You know Bill Walker wants to run for County Treasurer. You go to him and say: 'Bill, I think we could elect you County Treasurer.' He confesses he is thinking about making the race. Then you say: 'You know, Bill, if you and I would go to Washington together, and I'd write back to the paper

about what a hit you made with the big boys there, I think you'd have the inside track.' You'd offer transportation for both, which wouldn't cost you a cent, if he'd pay all the other expenses. And the farther from home you'd get the richer you'd get."

"What do you mean?"

"Well," grinned the foreman, "that's the way it worked with Jule. When he was in Kansas City he'd say: 'Oh, my little rag only pays me about two hundred dollars a month, but money isn't everything.' When he was in St. Louis he'd say: 'My little paper only pays me about four hundred a month, but money isn't everything.' When he went to Washington, and our Congressman introduced him as one of the leading editors of the Middle West, he'd modestly say: 'Oh, no, I own a little paper that only pays me about six hundred a month, but money isn't everything.' If Jule could have got free transportation for a trip to China he might have been the richest man alive when he got there."

I soon learned that I was not as smart as my genial friend Coe had been. My mother mortgaged her home to enable me to buy the paper and have a few hundred dollars to work on, but within three months I was in the red at the bank. After working all day on the paper I would go home and write things I hoped to sell to St. Louis and Kansas City newspapers and to magazines. Without that outside income, I could not have paid my printers nor have kept my mother from losing her home.

Desperation is an inspiring spur, however. It caused me to write for *Collier's Magazine* what purported to be the true story of a city newspaper man who had bought a country paper "and become an outstanding editor in the Middle West." There was some justification for that,

for I really was winning a lot of reputation, though I was a financial flop. Next to William Allen White, I was the most-quoted country editor in the Missouri Valley, and even New York and other distant papers frequently reprinted those quotes. Every Sunday the *Kansas City Star* and the *St. Louis Republic* featured humorous material of mine and occasionally I did special articles for the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*. A great many people in several Midwestern states had heard of me, and when they saw some squib of mine in a national magazine they assumed I was a success.

That article in *Collier's* made me think I was one, too. It brought a letter from the president of the National Editorial Association, asking me to speak at the Association's national convention. The president was a New York City man, the convention was to be in Houston. That, I thought, was national recognition!

Nothing was said about paying my expenses. But could I let such an opportunity pass? How proud Higginsville should be that its youthful editor had received such an honor! I must not brag about it. But after I left, the foreman could publish the piece I would have written, as if he had written it himself! It would say the town should realize that its editor had become a national personality.

A special convention train, all Pullmans, left New York and swung through the Middle West, picking up delegations from other areas. I caught it at St. Louis. I had never ridden in a Pullman before.

Though the convention was to last only three days, the party was to spend two weeks in Texas, visiting every important area. I had traveled so little that I thought I would need little money besides train fare. Before we got to Houston I realized I would have to miss at least

one meal a day and eat lightly at others to make my money last until the third day of the convention, when I was to speak.

As soon as I had made my speech I checked out of the Rice Hotel. I had just enough money to pay my hotel bill, tip the bell-hop, buy a chair car ticket to Kansas City, and have a little small change—about a dollar and a quarter—left for meals, tips and emergencies. No redcaps need apply to me on that trip. I would carry my bag myself.

When I boarded the train I went into the smoker. There, I hoped, I could throw two seats together when the smoker was not crowded, and sleep with some degree of comfort.

The train started out jauntily. But before it got to Denison it stopped and, after some delay, turned back. There were floods in Texas and, like everything else in Texas, they were supercolossal. After backing up a long way, the train had to detour all the way to Fort Worth. It took me five days to get back to Kansas City, and the last three days I subsisted on peanuts and water.

That was a strain on nerves as well as on physique, and I'm a squirmer when I'm nervous. I did not have a nickel left when the train pulled into Kansas City but I had mileage-book transportation from there back to Higginsville.

The finest train which ran through Higginsville would leave in half an hour and would stop there at seven o'clock on a beautiful May evening. I was hungry and tired and my clothes were wrinkled, but I must look as jaunty as I could, for that boastful article which had appeared in my paper during my absence would make the town feel I was a local boy returning from a national triumph.

As the train neared Higginsville, I spruced up the best I could and shined my shoes with a handkerchief. I knew that at seven o'clock most of my fellow citizens would have finished supper and would be out on their front porches, picking their teeth. For six blocks I must walk up the main residence street, observed by leading citizens from practically every porch. If I walked briskly, smiled brightly and held my head high they might not notice that my clothes showed I had slept in them for five days.

The train men hated to stop that crack train at little Higginsville. It would not stop there at all unless a passenger was to alight there or the station agent flagged it down. The brakeman warned me twice to be all ready, as the train would stop only thirty seconds.

The train stopped, grumbling. I stooped hurriedly to pick up my suitcase. As I did so I heard the sound of something tearing and felt something give way in the seat of my trousers. As I hurried to the exit I gingerly felt behind me with my free hand, and my well-practiced smile turned to horror.

My nervous squirmings in the smoking-car seat for five days and nights had worn my trousers so thin that as I stooped they had parted clear across the seat. A piece of material was flapping down halfway to my knees and my BVDs must be showing through, for I could feel them.

I had no time, I had no pins. I had no chance to make repairs. I had gone away with a swagger, but must return with a ragged behind!

I can never forget the smiling agony of that long walk up Main Street. From porches on both sides of the street people called greetings and observed me with unusual interest. Many asked questions about my trip, but I dared not stop nor even hesitate. I tried to hold my suitcase

behind me with one hand. As there were ladies on the first porches I did not merely tip my hat but swung it so low that it helped hide part of my southern exposure. No general desperately trying to cover his rear ever knew more agitated moments.

But I lived through it, and later wrote the harrowing experience into a semi-fiction article for *Collier's* which was reprinted in the *Literary Digest*. My little paper, too, got credit for starting the town on a program of good roads, paved streets, sewers and other improvements. Indeed, Charles Hoefer, a remarkable old gentleman who had become the county's leading banker, wished me to run for mayor of the town. But a war was starting in Europe and I though I had a chance to go to it as a correspondent. I cherished the idea that if I could see Europe and the great drama of war I might write that book I had been dreaming about since boyhood. So I sold my paper and returned to the *Star*.

SEVERAL GOOD MEN WHO HAD never left the *Star* also wanted to go to France as correspondents, and had the inside track. The *Star* wanted me as *Missouri* Editor because I had made newspaper friends all over the state and knew a lot about it. But I still yearned to go to France.

A former *Star* man, and a good friend, was in charge of Navy enlistments in Kansas City. I tried to get him to enlist me for some kind of limited service, but even my best friends could not see a way to enlist a man who could not tell friend from foe at twenty feet. Then I tried the Army, with the same result. Next I tried to organize a syndicate of twenty daily papers which could not afford correspondents of their own, offering to serve them all for ten dollars a week apiece. If I could be sure of two hundred a week I would borrow money to get to France. But only three accepted the offer.

Homer Croy, a fellow Missourian who lived in New York, was reputed to be a writer who could always pull a rabbit out of a hat for a friend. I wrote Homer of my efforts. Back came a letter telling that Croy was going to France as production manager for the Community

Motion Picture Bureau, which would supply about four thousand picture shows a week to YMCA, Red Cross, Salvation Army, Jewish Welfare Board, Knights of Columbus or any other accredited organization supplying entertainment for troops. Clarence Budington Kelland and a lot of other writers, he said, were going over in the uniforms of welfare organizations but really as correspondents for magazines and newspapers.

That solved everything. The *Star* was more than willing to give me correspondent's credentials and pay me for what I wrote, if relieved of the expense of transporting and supporting me. It already had a couple of correspondents overseas, and foreign correspondents are expensive luxuries. There was no better way to get human interest stories about the troops than to serve them, and the "Y" was willing to transport me if I would do that. At last my dream was to come true! I could travel and see the great, tragic, inspiring drama of war—and after it was all over I might write a book.

I got to France by way of New York, Montreal and London, and all of them thrilled me. I had never seen New York, and its great buildings awed me with realization of what men could achieve. I got only glimpses of Montreal and Quebec, but as our blacked-out convoy stole past Newfoundland in the night the Aurora Borealis put on a wonderful show. I spent a fascinated week in London before I could get passage to France, and found such places as the home of Becky Sharpe, the Old Curiosity Shop and the Cheshire Cheese. But when I got to Paris I felt I was in the world capital of glamour.

Every romantic youngster dreams of seeing Paris, and even its reputation for wickedness does not seem to be a deterrent. I was more than ready to see all of it through

rose-tinted glasses but it seemed anything but Gay Paree when I arrived at night. One dim, hooded street light every two hundred yards was all the light that showed, and I had expected something like the dazzle of New York's great white way. An aviator, flying over Paris could not have told, by sight, that there was a city or even a hamlet there. But inside the restaurants and cafes there was the reckless gaiety of persons who knew they might die tomorrow and wished to drain life to the dregs while they could. Men and women in twenty different uniforms were there, many just back from facing death, many others just about to return to face it, after brief leaves. The law required such places to close by nine o'clock, and the revelers had no time to lose.

I could not wait for the next day to get a glimpse of the magic city, and did not have to. Oney Higgins, the *Star's* main correspondent overseas, and Webb Miller of United Press, a *Star* graduate, knew I was coming and called for me at my hotel.

As they guided me down the lightless cavern of the Grand Boulevards I was puzzled by turret-like structures which suddenly loomed out of the darkness, seemingly in the middle of the sidewalks. After almost bumping into two or three I asked what they were. Higgins laughed.

"Comfort stations," he explained. "This is a practical country, where man's comfort is the first consideration."

We entered a cafe. After the darkness outdoors, its bright lights were dazzling, but our ears were smitten as much as were our eyes. A big American Marine, with a French girl tugging at one of his arms, was waving a drink in his free hand and declaiming:

"I can lick any son of a bitch in the house!"

The French, who could not understand him, shrugged and turned their backs. The big fellow repeated his challenge. Then he saw us entering, and added: "Not including Americans."

That was not entirely complimentary to us, but we went up to him with smiles.

"No use getting into a fight with our friends, pal," said Miller. "It's no fun spending most of your leave in jail at Hotel Ste. Anne." Hotel St. Anne was Military Police Headquarters.

The big Marine was ready to fight the world, but the friendly approach softened him in a moment.

"Okay," he said. "Let's all have a drink. Then I'll let this chick take me to a room."

A mere change of voice or expression could alter his mood from one craving battle and bloodshed to one craving friendship and love. In a few minutes, completely mollified, he swaggered out, the laughing girl clinging to his arm.

The cafe closed a few minutes later, and my friends took me back to my hotel. In the gloom, I could not have found it otherwise.

Next day the sun was shining and I really saw Paris, with growing admiration. It was spring. The horse-chestnuts were in bloom. The plane trees which shaded and beautified even the busiest business streets made me feel that most of the cities of America were foolish when they banned similar charm. The sidewalk cafes were crowded and so were the sidewalks. Soldiers of many lands paraded down the boulevards with their arms around their permanent or temporary sweethearts, as unabashed and unconcerned as if no one else had eyes. Down by the Seine, artists set up their easels on sidewalks

and sketched or painted with similar unconcern, though often passers stopped to peer over their shoulders and comment on their work.

The great boulevard system, which provided a very broad street every four or five blocks, with a place or plaza at almost every main intersection which was a clearing-house of traffic, impressed me almost as much as did the visual proof that Paris was a city of magnificent vistas. With none but public buildings exceeding the height-limit of five or six stories, one could see such landmarks as the Eiffel Tower, Sacre Coeur, the Arc de Triomphe, the Opera, the Louvre and the Pantheon, from the dome of which the dome of our Capitol in Washington was copied, from almost any main intersection.

"That shows that something good comes out of everything," laughed Homer Croy, who had taken charge of me that day. "Paris had so many narrow streets that they were revolution-breeders. Any dissident group could barricade one with a few kitchen tables and hold it as Leonidas held the pass. So Louis Napoleon got an engineer named Hausmann to lay out a system of boulevards wide enough to march a regiment through, with a square or place every few blocks in which such a regiment could maneuver. They never dreamed of automotive traffic then, but that boulevard system gave Paris, despite its many narrow streets, a better network of highways for motors than has any other city."

When I realized that nearly every place was marked by some historic edifice or monument, and from it one could look down four or more streets centering there and see other famous edifices, and so orient himself, I felt at home in Paris. Having seen many pictures of those structures, I felt I was surrounded by familiar things, and it is

familiar things which make any city lovable. One has only to locate in his mind the Eiffel Tower, the white church on top of Montmartre, the towers of Notre Dame, the Trocadero, the Arc de Triomphe or the dome of the Pantheon and he could always sight a recognizable guide-post.

The book stalls on the Left Bank, the flower vendors on street corners, the sidewalk cafes and horse-drawn vehicles for sightseers were all familiar because of pictures I had seen, and I felt almost proprietary interest in Avenue de President Wilson, the house in which Ben Franklin lived, the one in which "Home, Sweet Home" was composed and the monument to Lafayette in the gardens of the Louvre, the gift to France of a million American school children who gave pennies. I had heard the Champs Elysees called the noblest city street in the world, and when I saw it I thought it justified being likened to Elysian fields. Ah, yes! Paris was a dream come true, not a disappintment.

But the Roman baths in Parc Monceau and the room in the Cluny Musee in which Julian was crowned Emperor of Rome impressed me most of all, seeming to make the whole history of Europe unroll before my inner vision.

Croy was then absorbing ideas for his novel, *They Had to See Paris*, which Will Rogers, a decade later, was to make his greatest motion picture success. But at that time Croy was so busy with pressing duties to the Army that he could spare time to give me only a swift tour of the city. Then he took me to his modest hotel, where he had arranged for me to share a room with him. And once I knew how to get about the city, I too had duties to perform.

A MAN'S REPUTATION IS LIKELY to pursue him to the ends of the earth. Back home I had some repute as a teller of humorous stories and had even been billed over a Chautauqua circuit as "the Missouri Poet Laureate." Croy and some others in Paris knew this, and it was suggested that, while getting oriented, I do some entertaining in hospitals.

Anyone who wishes to learn what true courage and fortitude and heroism are need only visit an army hospital. Men in battle are nerved by the thrill of battle and by patriotic fervor, and strengthened by the hope that they will come through all right. But many men in military hospitals know they are doomed, or must face the rest of life sightless, armless or legless or as mere wrecks of the proud beings they were. Yet the cheery badinage and unconquerable spirit of most of those men makes the average visitor go away with a feeling of shame for his own complainings.

Some Yanks were in French hospitals. In one of those I met Georges Babin, a little Frenchman who seemed to typify his nation. He had loved a gay life—good food, good wine, pretty women and good fellowship. All that

was behind him, for he knew he must die soon. But he shrugged and joked about that, the *bon mot* being an integral part of his makeup. And he was happy, because at last his two little girls were coming home.

He had been a small merchant, prosperous enough to send his daughters to a convent-school in Holland where their classmates included German, Belgian, Dutch and English girls and the daughter of the President of Peru. The Convent was so close to the German border that part of its grounds were in Germany, and when the war had caught the girls there they had been unable to get home. Two years had passed before the nuns had been able to get the girls to England, and then more time elapsed before they could get to France. Georges had feared he would not live to see them again. But now they were coming home.

I had heard a lot of people back home complain of war sacrifices, but they did not seem to rate with those of Georges. He had been drafted as a private, paid five cents a day, though he was nearly fifty. His wife had been unable to carry on the business and had had to let it go for almost nothing. She had had to move from a pleasant home to a tiny flat one had to climb five flights of stairs to reach. It consisted of a kitchen about the size of the galley on a small fishing boat, a living room and two small bedrooms. A fireplace in the living room was the only means of heat, and the coal for it had to be carried up from the basement, six flights down. There was no electricity, and light came from a gasoline lamp which had to be pumped up at intervals. The furniture was good, for it had come from the former home, and there was sunlight and air, for the flat was the top floor of an ancient and dismal building. There Madame Babin gallantly tried

to eke out a living by designing dresses and selling them as models which employers of seamstresses could have their employees copy. But as nearly all the women of France were in mourning and money was very scarce there was little demand for such models, and the prices were down to their lowest.

All that Croy and I did not learn until later. But when we learned it, it struck us that people in America had little idea what war means to the civilian population when it comes to one's own country, paralyzing industry, commerce, the movement of food from the country and the occupations in which millions of persons earn their living. Madame Babin received no allotment as a soldier's dependent and even Georges' meager pay was scrip, not cash.

Georges wanted to be at home when his daughters arrived. He thought or pretended to think, Madame's good soup would restore him to health. The overcrowded French hospital was willing to let him go. Croy and I took him home in a taxi, helped him up the five flights of stairs and deposited him in a bedroom.

He and Madame seemed brightly happy. They proudly showed snapshots of the little girls, pretty children apparently about fourteen and sixteen years old, and also of the comparatively luxurious home in which the family had lived before the war. Croy and I feared the girls would be terribly depressed by the changes they would find.

Relatives in Normandie met the girls when they landed and would put them on a train for Paris. Croy and I arranged to pick Madame up and go with her to the station to handle the luggage.

In overdue time, the train arrived—and Croy and I got the surprise of our lives. Georges had failed to mention the fact that the snapshots we had seen had been taken four years before. The girls were so small they looked almost like children, but Georgette was eighteen, Madeleine twenty.

What a crushing blow it was going to be to those young ladies, who remembered home as a charming place and their father as debonair and sturdy, to climb those flights of gloomy stairs and greet a dying man!

The girls were so used to speaking English and German that those languages frequently intruded in the gushing springs of French which they poured on their mother.

"You will excuse us, please, Messieurs," apologized Madeleine. "We have been apart so long." And then French much too rapid for us to follow spattered all over the taxi.

If the gloomy old building daunted the girls they gave no sign of it. They raced up the stairs to embrace their father. By the time Madame and two puffy Americans got to the top one was on each side of Georges, with an arm about him, and all three looked as if life was just beginning.

They made Croy and me stay to dinner, and we had never attended a happier dinner. It was Croy who, while puffing a postprandial cigar, brought our minds back to practical things by asking:

"What do you girls expect to do now?"

"Why, find work, of course," said Madeleine confidently. "We shall find work tomorrow, and all shall be well."

Croy had been there long enough to know that hundreds of shops had closed, because of lack of things to

sell and because so few had money with which to buy, and wages were miserably low.

"What kind of work?" he asked.

"We can speak and write English and German correctly, as well as French. We should be useful somewhere. Or maybe we could teach French to Americans."

"That cannot be arranged in a day."

"Maybe no. But *Le Bon Dieu* always finds a way for those who wish to do their best."

She spoke as if repeating a fact no one could dispute. Georgette nodded agreement.

We could not raise doubts in the face of such serene faith, but we went away troubled, imagining the cruel disappointments in store for those trusting kids.

Next day Croy and I had lunch together. Croy was grinning mysteriously.

"Do you believe faith can work miracles?" he asked.

"I'd like to, but fear I haven't got that kind."

"Well, it looks as if that youngster Madeleine has it. This morning, out of a clear sky, the head of our shipping department came to me with a problem. He needs a couple of employees who can read and write English, French and German correctly. Tomorrow, if they want it, those two little mademoiselles we met yesterday can have jobs."

WAR AND WARRIORS HAD ALWAYS filled my head with visions. As a boy, I had taken turns at being Nathan Hale, D'Artagnan, Cyrano and Sidney Carton. It was a far better thing to die for something worth dying for than to live for something not worth living for. I had come to France with romantic dreams of seizing some opportunity for heroic service. But when I got to the front and showed eagerness to take some risks an iron-jawed colonel grunted:

"So you're another Goddamned souvenir hunter!"

"No, sir. I don't care a thing for souvenirs."

"I mean medals, citations in general orders, chances to write eye-witness stuff which will make your readers think how brave you are. You're all souvenir hunters, and we have to detail good fighting men to keep you from getting killed or captured. If you wish really to help, be a good boy and don't go anywhere you haven't permission to go."

That was depressing, but I soon learned it was justified. The officer who took needless risks with his men, in hope of making a record for dash, was sneeringly called a souvenir-hunter, behind his back, by his own troops. So was

anyone else who tried to turn his duty into a grandstand play. And one close shave cured me of over-eagerness.

At first the front bewildered me. No Man's Land was so wide, in places, that the Lost Battalion wandered about in it for days, unable to locate either allies or enemies. Clearly a man who could not tell friend from foe at twenty feet had no business out there alone.

There was plenty of human interest to write. The boys in the dugouts who got letters from home, and those who did not. The buddies who would die for one another in battle but were merciless in a crap game. The boys who had come with visions of glory but now whooped with joy when they got a pass which would take them out of the fighting for a few days. And yet the grim, magnificent courage with which they carried out any dangerous assignment.

I obeyed orders, realizing that if I went where any non-combatant was not supposed to go it would give the enemy excuse for charging that fighting men were disguised as noncombatants, and therefore they had a right to shoot anyone in noncombatant uniform on sight. Correspondents were supposed to learn what they might write at headquarters, and shown certain things on big maps. But I was writing only the human interest side of war, leaving strategy and battle reports to better men. If one of the papers using my stuff wanted news of a certain unit or certain individual, I tried to get it, but mostly the war was only background in what I wrote.

I was a good boy, gaining the confidence of certain officers and some ability to take care of myself. Then one paper which was using my stuff wanted a story about the 152nd Machine Gun Battalion, which was in battle. I asked permission to go after it.

"All right," said the Colonel. "I'm sending a runner to the P. C. in that sector. You can go with him."

We were back with the artillery, behind the crest of a hill. A few hundred yards from us, in the valley, were four kitchen outfits, one belonging to the machine-gun outfit I wished to contact. The runner and I went there first, to ask where the men were.

"Search us," said the mess sergeant. "We ain't contacted 'em for three days. We take the food up where they're supposed to pick it up, but the detail sent for it hasn't found it the last three days."

I wondered how it would feel to be out there fighting, in the rain and the mud and the penetrating cold of night, with no rations for three days.

The sergeant pointed to a road, outlined in trees as all the French roads were.

"Five kilometers up that road," he said, "a ravine angles off to the left, up that ravine you'll find a P. C.—if you look sharp. Maybe there they can tell you where the boys are, but they can't seem to tell us how we can get the food to 'em. We ain't rondyvood with that outfit for so long the boys must be gettin' mighty hungry."

The runner, of course, knew where the Post of Command was. But we did not follow the road which led toward it. The Germans were shelling that road frequently and without warning, sometimes with gas. Because of the trees, it was easy to keep the road in sight as a guide. The runner led me across fields pitted with shell holes, row on row of them about forty feet apart. The creeping barrage had made them. In some of the holes we saw dead men, not yet found by burial parties. The fighting was fierce and the front had changed so rapidly that the Sanitary Corps, like the kitchens, had not been able to keep

track of moving units. All that part of the world was a wilderness of death, and the war would have to sweep clear past it before some things which had happened there could become known.

If the runner had not known where the Post of Command was I would have missed it. It was only an abandoned wine cellar covered with sandbags, so that it looked like the bare earth about it from a distance. No flag or anything else distinguished it. It was on the edge of what had been a village but now was only rubble, and the effort had been to make the P. C. look like more rubble.

I had a Paris newspaper, three days old, in one pocket of my blouse. The officers in the Post of Command snatched it from me.

"Jesus Christ!" exploded a major. "Let's see how the war's going." That reflected bitter truth. They, who were fighting it, had little idea how the war was going except in the little area about them.

That night I slept, more or less, in a three-storied dugout. It had been captured and recaptured many times and had been inhabited by French, German, English and American outfits, each of which had dug it deeper into the side of a hill and had left some of its cooties there for remembrance. The hill jutted into a valley and just beyond it were the Germans who had held it only a day or two before but had been pushed back. The huge dugout had been behind the German lines then, now it was sheltered from them by the hill into which it had been clawed. Where one entered it, it looked like an ordinary cave. But an earth ramp led down from that level to a lower level, and another ramp to a level below that.

The walls of each level were lined with bunks which were mere boxes of rough lumber. Some had a little straw in them, but most of them were only bare boards, the straw having been hurled out by men who loathed the vermin in it. But to men just out of battle in the rain and mud, that dugout was Heaven, a place where they could forget the roar of shells and the waspish whine of bullets. Some men immediately tumbled into the bunks and went to sleep. Some others made surly jokes as they slid into them, pretending to fling cooties on one another, and vowing they were so big they could hear them bounce. But one clump of men, despite their weariness and stiffness and the perils which might make any day their last, gathered in a tight knot to shoot craps, though they had just lived through another day of the greatest gamble in the world.

"Lights out!" snarled a sergeant. "And I'll castrate any bastard I catch shootin' craps by flashlight. You goddamned well need all the sleep you can get."

He was more than correct. That outfit had to turn out before dawn. I turned out with it. So did a chaplain. When the men saw him they guessed that they were about to be called on for an assault.

They shivered and their faces set grimly as they moved out into the bone-searching cold. Thank God it wasn't raining! But there had been rain a few hours before and there was skim ice on the puddles.

The men looked like dream figures in the darkness which was just beginning not to be blackness, and were almost as silent, though some breathed heavily. As they moved toward the point of the sheltering hill which jutted into the valley they trod stealthily and whispered, though the nearest enemy seemed a quarter-mile away.

Perhaps three hundred yards beyond the end of that protecting shoulder of hill a nest of German machine guns had been causing trouble. That was to be surprised, or wiped out, whether surprised or not.

Orders were passed in whispers. The men fanned out into the darkness. They crept forward until, to the chaplain and me, they were only blurs of deeper darkness in the dark.

The first hint of dawn rimmed the east. The line of dream figures surged forward, more swiftly yet still cautiously. The chaplain, straining his eyes, could barely make them out and I could not see them at all. We both prayed the enemy would not see them.

They had to cross the lowest sink of the valley, then charge uphill for perhaps a hundred and fifty yards. There was a mist cloud in that lowest sink. The men vanished into it. O God, we prayed, let them go all the way undetected! They must be nearly there now!

All was so still I heard the tinkle of thin ice, crushed under some hobnailed boot. But I could not have heard it had I not been intensely alert for sounds. Pray God the Germans had not heard it! At least, no sound came from them.

Then suddenly the eastern sky grew brighter, and the chaplain could see the Yanks leaping forward like desperate shadows. But as suddenly our racing hearts stood still. The enemy machine-guns began to rattle, and flashes lit the dark like fireflies.

Our men did not stop to fire. Some of them fell, but the others did not stop for them, either. They rushed on madly, swinging their bayonets. They were full of hate and fury and blood lust. They had no time to pause for a buddy who had been hit, but they would make the bas-

tards pay! It was kill or be killed now, and they must be the first to kill.

When they reached the nest only one German was there. The rest had fled. A dozen Yanks leaped on that one with bayonets, for he was still fighting fiercely with his trench knife. In seconds they had almost torn him to pieces with bayonets.

Then a strange thing happened. Once their own immediate danger of death was ended they no longer hated the man who had tried to kill them. Now he was harmless he ceased to be an enemy and was just another human being.

They picked him up, as tenderly as they might have picked up a child their motor car had crushed. Two of them carried him back to where the chaplain and I waited, and laid him on the ground before the chaplain.

The chaplain knelt beside the German and asked, in German, if there was any last message he wished to send. The only answer was a scornful glare.

One of the boys who had thrust a bayonet into the German knelt on the other side, lit a cigarette and placed it between the dying man's lips. The German's eyes lit with surprise, as if he had not realized that Americans could be human. He seemed almost grateful.

Again the chaplain asked if he wished to send any last message. We thought the man too far gone to answer, but his face hardened and he gasped:

"God—damn—Americans."

The Yanks who had carried him there didn't mind. They shrugged and smiled at one another. The cigarette had fallen from the captive's lips when he spoke. The boy who had lit it for him picked it up and replaced it.

The chaplain began to pray in German.

The last gasp came. The chaplain arose and dusted his knee.

"Dead," he said.

"A Kraut to the last," said the boy who had lit the cigarette.

"Yes," agreed the chaplain, "by accident of birth. Born a few miles from where he was born, he might have been an equally loyal Frenchman or Belgian or Pole. Born in our country, he might have been a good American. Some day we'll get intelligent enough to quit this folly."

THE END OF WARS

IT WAS NEAR VERDUN that I saw the end of the war to end all wars.

For days there had been rumors of impending peace, but the men facing death sneered at them. And the morning of November eleventh, 1918, was anything but hope-inspiring. As usual, there had been rain in the night and there was skim ice on many puddles. At three o'clock in the morning our barrage and the enemy's counter fire began shaking the earth, as if each side was trying to use up all the ammunition on hand. Shells flying in both directions screamed over our heads, for we were about three miles ahead of the American artillery, and the distance-dulled thudding of our own big guns beat on our hopes like hammer blows.

The men who had lain on their guns in shell holes through hours of icy drizzle had felt so miserable they had welcomed the excitement of clashes with German patrols. The men who turned out to relieve them curled their lips with muttered or unuttered curses before their faces set with grim ferocity. They had to be hard, or they would go to pieces. Before they found their places, out there in

the dark, they would pass or stumble over dead men in their own uniforms.

All morning the fighting was fierce and vengeful. If a man in a trench stuck his cap up on a bayonet it would immediately draw fire, and might come down with two or three bullet holes in it. But at half past ten runners went out from our post of command, and at a quarter of eleven the command went down the line: "Cease fire at eleven."

The men could hardly believe it, yet exultation made their faces shine. The Germans had given up, and we had won the victory! The war was practically over, and we had come through it all right! It was great to have taken part in the war which was to end all wars, and to have lived through it so that one might tell his grandchildren about it.

"Don't lose your heads," warned a tough sergeant. "Maybe it's just another Goddamned trick. Or maybe it's only a breathing-space truce—one minute between rounds."

At one minute to eleven a boy whose wrist watch was fast leaped out of his shell hole with a cheer—and went down with a German bullet through his heart. That sent a fierce, hopeless chill down the line in our sector. Who the hell dreamed up the idea that peace was near?

But at eleven o'clock we heard a bugle and knew the war was over. No one had ever heard a bugle at the front in that war, in which noiseless stealth had been the rule, the effort to kill before being recognized as enemies the common objective. That bugle was so completely a surprise that even the men who had seen their comrade shot down a minute before could not doubt its meaning. A dozen of them leaped out of trenches and shell holes, and

no shots came from the enemy lines. Then all the men poured out, and nothing happened.

They seized one another and hugged and pounded one another on the back. They shook hands and danced and sang. They leaped for joy, though the eyes of many filled with tears.

The Germans, too, came out of their trenches and stared at the rejoicing Yanks. The Yank sergeant who had warned his men to beware of traps threw down his gun and his helmet and started toward the Germans with hands held out in friendly greeting. A score of Yanks followed him, after also throwing down their guns and tin hats. The Germans caught the idea and edged forward to meet our men.

In a few minutes, men who had been craftily trying to kill one another were trading souvenirs, shaking hands and even dancing together. The Germans had plenty of wine, captured from the French at Epernay and Rheims, but they had not had any decent bread for a long time. Even the hardtack the Americans called iron rations rejoiced the Germans. Now that peace had come no one wanted to find fault with anything, for the moment. Now that they no longer had reason to fear one another they no longer had any reason to hate one another.

Before I had seen war I had thought of fields of battle as fields of chivalry and pride and glory. Now war seemed to me the most senseless thing in all the world. There never had been a dispute between nations, I thought, which could not have been settled far more justly and permanently if it had been settled—by a universally recognized code of justice—at a council table. There had never been good reason why those men who could be so

friendly now should have been called on to do their utmost to kill one another.

The war had brought death and deformity and blindness to millions in battle, ruin and forced immorality and depravity to millions of noncombatants. In single battles it had wiped out some of the finest achievements of a thousand years of civilization, and had left great nations so crippled they might never recover.

I was proud of our part in it. I felt there was nothing else we could have done. Yet, after all, it would have to be settled at a council table, and it would have saved no end of blood and tears if there had only been some international system by which it could have been settled in that way in the first place.

But now that all the world had seen such clear proofs of the folly of war, humanity would never again be crazy enough to let a big one start. Now, at last we would have something like the Parliament of Man and Federation of the World which Tennyson had predicted. Now we would enact and ratify some code of international ethics so just that our nation and every other nation could subscribe to it and yet so binding that no nation would dare defy the rulings of its Court of Justice.

Ah, yes! It had been a terrible lesson the world had had to learn. But had it not been worth it?

WHEN THE WAR ENDED, TWO million Yanks wished to go home right now. Millions of English, Canadians, Australians and men of other armies also wished to go home right now. It would be a year or more before many of them could go home. There must be much international bickering before it would be safe to move many of them, and there were not enough ships to move all of them within a year.

It was a full month after the war, for example, before we could send hospital trains to transport the American prisoners of war from Rastatt Prison Camp in Germany, and longer before we could get to some others. Rastatt was near the Swiss frontier, and the American trains had to cross Swiss territory to get to it. Switzerland was shy of letting a military train, even a hospital train, of any foreign power enter its borders, and the arrangements were planned in secrecy. A good friend of mine, however, was in on the secret arrangements, and gave me a tip on it. I managed to join the staff of Hospital Train No. 55, wearing the uniform of an enlisted man and pretending to be one of the members of the Sanitary Corps. Captain

McFaul, commanding the train, kindly mistook me for one of his regular crew.

Thus I was the only correspondent who got to go to meet the American prisoners of war. As many persons fear that some day Germany and Russia may join in an effort to conquer all Europe, or all the world, some highlights of that trip may be interesting. There were twenty-five hundred American prisoners in Rastatt, and most of them were in good physical condition, though many had been wounded when captured. A YMCA man named Hoffman, from Kansas, had been in Germany when the war began and had convinced the Germans he could be helpful to both sides without betraying either. Through the International Red Cross in Geneva he had arranged for the weekly shipment of Red Cross food packages, American Library Association books, YMCA athletic and entertainment equipment and the handling of prisoners' mail. Thus the Yanks had their own good band, their baseball, basketball and other teams, their study classes, their chess and checker tournaments and, most important of all, plenty to eat.

It took three hospital trains several trips to get those Yank prisoners to Vichy, France, during which time I personally interviewed about eight hundred of them. A boy who had worked in the prison bakery told me the prisoners' bread was almost fifty percent sawdust. If a horse or mule died the meat went into soup, otherwise scraps from the officers' tables gave it a meat flavor.

Once the American food packages began coming through, the Yanks ate little of their prison fare. Their compound was separated from the Russian compound by barbed wire, so thick and strong one needed special tools to cut it. A few feet from the wire, on each side, was a

chalk line. The prisoners were warned that if they crossed those chalk lines they would be shot by the guards in the turrets. But there were hordes of Russians in the Russian compound, and the Yanks could see through the barbed wire. A strong guard of Germans would bring in a barrel of soup and a hand truck filled with thick slices of coarse bread. One ladle of soup and one slice of bread, the boys told me, was all the Russians got. They were so famished that when the barrels were empty they would lay them on their sides and crawl into them to lick the sides and bottoms. Only seven men died in the American compound, but the boys declared that thousands died on the Russian side.

"They were diggin' graves, every day and Sunday, too," one of the boys told me.

The Yanks found ways of getting most of the prison rations they did not want to the Russians. A slice of bread could be sailed over the barbed wire—and fiercely fought for on the other side. Some other things required challenging ingenuity, but the Yanks had it. The starving Russians were so grateful that they tossed back little coins, some of them probably worth less than an American penny. Nearly every Yank I talked with on those trips had a pocket full of those souvenirs.

In every way, the boys told me, the Yanks were given good treatment by the German guards, while the Russians were treated with contempt and harshness. There were such hordes of Russian prisoners, not only at Rastatt but in many other prison camps, that some of them must have carried hatred of Germany back to every village in Russia.

When I got back to Paris, Christmas was only a week away. The boys who had imagined they would be home

for Christmas, once the war was over, were full of complaints and cynicism, and entertainment had become the Army's big project. Boxing tournaments and soldier shows were inspired in every division and attempted in every company. Company boxing champions battled to become regimental champions, then division champions and, finally, in a big tournament in the Cirque de Paris, AEF champions. The Inter-Allied Games, a great track meet in which the champions of all the armies were asked to compete, was planned. At Brest the Army discovered a corporal named Howard Lindsay who had a good deal of theatrical knowhow and ordered him to create a stock company which would present important drama. At Tours the colonel of a New York regiment in which Brooklynese was the prevailing speech dramatized scenes from "Ivanhoe" and put them on as an outdoor spectacle, using a fine old chateau for castle scenes. An Army cook was found to have been Pavlova's dancing partner, and suddenly was relieved of kitchen duties. Half a dozen Paris theaters and many in other cities were taken over for soldier shows, free to men in uniform.

Lindsay's troupe, the Brest Players, made such a reputation that it was chosen to appear in the Theatre des Champs Elysees before President Wilson and other dignitaries. Paris was then so crowded that Lindsay could not get a hotel room, and Croy, an old friend, brought him to our room to sleep on a cot the two weeks his show was in town.

That show got a lot of publicity, even though Paris newspapers were limited by law to four pages, and its productions were so much more artistic than most of the soldier shows that those which came afterward found it hard to get more than bare mention in the papers.

That was the situation when the Thirty-fifth Division show, the Mo-Kan Minstrels, came to appear at the Palais de Glace. The publicity officer with the show knew nothing of publicity. He had merely come along for the ride. But he was smart enough to look me up and argue that, as the division was made up of Missouri and Kansas troops, it was the duty of a *Kansas City Star* man to do all he could for it.

As minstrel shows were a dime a dozen, the only plan I could think of to get some notice was to have some distinguished guests of honor. I invited William Allen White and Manley O. Hudson of the Peace Mission, William Lindsay White, Ida M. Tarbell, Elizabeth Frazier of the *Saturday Evening Post* and two correspondents for important Midwestern newspapers to be my guests for dinner and then the show. I also invited the editors of the Paris editions of the *New York Herald, Chicago Tribune* and *London Daily Mail,* who did not come but did give the show publicity.

That was to be the most pretentious dinner party of my life. I reserved a table at an excellent restaurant for six o'clock and hired the biggest taxicab I ever saw. I was to pick up my guests at five-forty at the Hotel Continental. When I got there, W. L. White met me with apologies.

"Father has just telephoned," he said. "The Peace Mission is all tied up in conference. He will get here as soon as he can."

We waited. Six o'clock came. Six-thirty. Seven. Seven-thirty. I was on tenterhooks, for Paris restaurants were so jammed then they were not likely to hold reservations so long. But my guests were such good sports the time passed pleasantly. At last Mr. White appeared and we

met him on the sidewalk, giving up Dr. Hudson, who had not been sure he could come and had not arrived. We piled into the taxi and dashed to the restaurant, not giving White time to catch his breath.

The vestiaire at the restaurant pointed to the clock and scolded me for being late. But our reserved table still waited, in the midst of a sea of diners. Miss Frazier, who spoke perfect French, told the waiters we were in a great hurry, and they co-operated. While some were pushing chairs under us others poured wine and served soup. But before we could taste anything, Mr. White exclaimed!

"Wait a minute. Doesn't the show start at eight?"

I said it did.

"Well," said White, rising, "we can eat any time, but if we want to see that show we must go right now."

So ended the most pretentious dinner party of my life. We arose and streaked out of the restaurant as hurriedly as we had come in, with all the waiters and other diners staring at the crazy Americans.

But our huge taxi was not there. No Frenchman then expected a dinner to take less than two hours, and the driver evidently had felt he had plenty of time to pick up another fare. Or maybe some general had simply commandeered the taxi. Anyhow, we had no transportation, for no other taxi was in sight.

Far up the street young Bill White saw a very small taxi approaching, one of the tiny cabs then forbidden by law to carry more than three passengers. But to the future author of *They Were Expendable* that law, too, was expendable.

"Hide in the entry," he called, "We'll stop it."

Like laughing school children, my distinguished guests hid in the restaurant entry until young Bill and I stopped

the cab. Once we got the door open and one foot inside, the others swarmed out. William Allen White leaped into the cab, exclaiming: "I'll hold any two of the girls on my lap!" Miss Tarbell and Miss Frazier squeezed in with him, and the rest of us hung on wherever we could, W. L. White and I on the running board.

"C'est defendu!" wailed the driver. "It is forbidden!"

"No compree," we chorused, that being the universal retort of Doughboys who did not want to understand. I slipped ten francs into the driver's hand. He shrugged and started on.

The Palais de Glace was jammed, with hundreds of men standing. The management had given us up and let others take our reserved seats. But chairs were hastily brought from the canteen next door and squeezed in between members of the orchestra.

Every time the trap drummer got busy Mr. White had to dodge, and every time the slide trombone was working Miss Tarbell had to duck. But wonderful guests make any party a success. Years afterward William Allen White told me that evening was one of his bright memories of Paris.

GEORGES BABIN DIED. CROY and I marched in the little funeral procession. We were glad the gallant little man had died, for dead men have no worries. And the little family he left surely would have worries. The Yanks were going home. Soon the girls would have no jobs.

But few things are as easy to forget as other people's troubles. Croy and I had had little chance to see Paris and its environs. We felt we had to see Paris, and Croy was eager to get home to his family—and get at the novel he had been vaguely planning. It seemed it would be weeks, perhaps months, before we could get passage, but we must live as if each day might be our last in Paris. I, at least, never expected to see it again.

Croy had such a simple, ingenuous, innocent, country-boy manner that people generally felt they should protect him. But few persons had such ability to plan and work miracles. Croy suddenly got passage home, while hundreds of persons who thought their priorities were much higher than his had to wait and fidget.

The day before Croy left Madeleine and Georgette were given notice that the Community Motion Picture

Bureau was getting ready to close out, and they would be jobless in two weeks.

They did not tell Croy that, fearing the news would mar his last day.

War's end had so reduced my income that I could not afford to keep the hotel room Croy and I had shared unless I could get another roommate. And it seemed that everyone I would have liked as a roommate was going home. We had had wonderful times in that room. Many famous correspondents had been our guests there and the place was full of memories. After such a wealth of geniality, I shied from thought of taking in a stranger.

Then an idea struck me. Georges Babin had occupied a bedroom alone, his wife and daughters crowding into one room for companionship and warmth. They were all so small they needed little space. I did not know how they arranged things there, but did know that they still shared one room, and the room in which Georges had died was unoccupied.

If I could rent that room for approximately what I paid to share a room with Croy and also could arrange to take meals with Madame Babin it would cushion the blow when the girls were out of work. It would also give me a real acquaintance with French family life, which I should have if I was ever going to write that book I intended to write some day. I had been living in a hotel which catered to American tastes and nearly all my time had been spent with Americans. A few weeks in a French home was just what I needed.

Madame Babin was delighted and perhaps relieved by the idea. So I moved, and began to learn about life in France.

The two daughters got up early, got breakfast and served their mother in bed. Then they washed the dishes and did the marketing for the day. In the evening they cooked the dinner, washed the dishes and then one helped the mother with her sewing while the other read aloud.

Madame loved to make models and pretty feminine wearables of all kinds, but she was an artiste and hated to do housework. Always before she had had a maid. So it was the girls who carried up the coal and built the fires. And they thought that was perfectly right.

When the girls received pay envelopes they carried them, unopened, to their mother. She gave each carfare for the week and kept the rest. Neither of the girls had ever bought a garment for herself. The mother loved to dress them prettily, but she decided what they should wear and made it. She looked on what the girls made as hers to manage, and so did they. Except when weather was bad, they walked to and from their work and bought bunches of violets for their mother with the carfare.

Though the mother was absolute dictator, Mademoiselle Madeleine was the administrator. She was the one whose spirit held the family together and whose absolute faith kept them brimming with bright hopes. They could have more gaiety and fun over a breakfast of chicory coffee and weak milk and a butterless bun than most persons could have over a banquet. The only depressing moments came when Madame completed a model and sent Madeleine out to try to sell it. Madame could not bear the rebuffs when a model was rejected, so it was Madeleine who had to deliver the goods and bring home the rejections.

I could not imagine any two American girls, who were the main support of their mother, who would so completely submit to her judgment in everything. Yet those girls were happy-hearted and unrebellious. They treated their mother like a queen and found delight in giving her pretty surprises.

They made me realize that nothing is intolerable until thinking makes it so, and most of us who suffer pangs of bitterness do so largely because we think we should. Those girls were proud of their mother's artistic talents, grateful to her for all she did for them and happy nearly all the time, because they were convinced they should be.

The work at the Community Motion Picture Bureau shrank to a trickle and the girls were out of jobs. They were given warm letters of recommendation and were sure of finding jobs in a hurry. But I was far less confident. A million demobilized French soldiers were clamoring for the jobs the gallant women had taken when the men went to war, and women were being ousted by thousands. Women experienced in every line of endeavour were desperately seeking any decent way of making a living, and some were so discouraged they no longer insisted it be decent. Women who had lived in ease suddenly found themselves faced with the problem of taking care of blind or legless or invalid husbands who were getting no pensions. Business was at a standstill, for only the foreigners had money to spend.

My work was ended and I was awaiting passage home. Each day one of the girls remained at home, to help Madame, while the other went with me to look for work. The American Chamber of Commerce gave us a few leads—companies which might use girls who could speak three languages—but they led to nothing but vague

promises. The American Express thought the girls too pretty and immature and Brentano's book store was already overstaffed. Wherever applications could be left they were left, but no one held out any but dim hope.

Still it was I who did the worrying. Madeleine and Georgette seemed calmly sure that very soon they would have some big and joyous surprise.

Though the girls knew nothing of the tawdry side of their beautiful city, they knew its historic and romantic sides exceptionally well. Madeleine was especially fond of history, and almost every block in Paris reminded her of it. As we trudged from office to office to file job applications she often paused to tell me the story of some building or monument or plaque. She made all Paris glow for me long before I discovered the reason why.

When I did discover it, I thought I must run away, absent myself from Paris and from her.

She and Georgette called me Grand Frere, and thought of me only as an elder brother. Madeleine was fifteen years my junior and seemed younger, and I couldn't be such a fool as to imagine she could think of me in any other way. Besides, it would be tragic if she could, for I was pledged to a woman of my own age back home, a woman so gifted and admirable in many ways that I had set her on a pedestal, though also so temperamental and fond of dramatizing herself that we quarreled often. But I was pledged, and my passage was booked. In two weeks I must return to another life, another world.

FRANK M. PAUL, A FINE FELLOW from Kansas whom I greatly admired, was about to take a trip, by car, to Belgium and Holland. I seized the chance to go with him. That would keep me away until two or three days before I left for home.

After completing arrangements with Frank, I returned to the little flat for dinner and remarked, with great casualness, that next day I would be off for Antwerp, Brussels, The Hague, Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Madeleine clapped her hands.

"Some of my best friends at school were from Antwerp and Rotterdam and Amsterdam!" she cried. "They are all of prominent families. I will give you their addresses."

She showed snapshots of the girls. Three of them were lovely. It oddly pained me to see how eager she was for me to meet her most charming friends. No girl who had even the faintest romantic interest in me could be so eager for me to meet other charmers. I tried to be glad she had no inkling of my secret feelings for her.

Frank thought he spoke German well enough to get along. I thought I spoke French well enough. But in Belgium our egotism was severely dented. In Antwerp the

car had to go into a shop for a couple of days. Frank had already finished his assignment in Antwerp and Brussels was only a couple of hours away by train. We decided to go to Brussels, clear up Frank's business there and then return to pick up the car.

We traveled in a first-class compartment in which were two Belgium women, evidently unacquainted with one another. There was no conversation. Finally Frank asked the women, in German, if they would mind if he smoked. Neither seemed to have the slightest idea what he was asking. Then I tried in French and they were even more confused.

"They must be Flemish," said Paul. "They don't understand either German or French." I agreed.

But a man who wants to smoke becomes ingenious. Frank produced his cigarette case, opened it and went through the gestures of smoking. Instantly the faces of both women lit with understanding.

"*Merci, Monsieur!*" cried one, reaching for a cigarette.

"*Dankeschoen!*" cried the other, following suit.

At that time, in the Middle West, only women who did not care what people thought about them dared smoke in public, and very few French women smoked. Frank and I were surprised, but what shocked us was realization of our lingual deficiencies. We got another jolt the day we returned to Antwerp. As we strolled out of the station a little bootblack, about nine years old, called: "Shine, sir?"

No mistaking his words nor accent. As a linguist he put us in our place. He seemed able to guess the nationality of any passer and called his offer of service to each in his own tongue, French, Dutch or Flemish. To Englishmen he said "Polish, sir" instead of "Shine."

In a good car, we could tour all over Belgium and Holland in two weeks, but we did not have time to look up Madeleine's friends. I tried to get absorbed in the places I was seeing. But all the time I kept seeing a girl who was not there, though I never mentioned her.

When we returned to Paris I checked on my passage booking and found that all was in order. I must be in Brest the next day. There was a train next morning, but it would be safer to take the train at eleven o'clock that night, the booking agency advised.

It certainly would! The nearer the moment came when I must say goodbye the more I dreaded it. Three weeks before I had thought I could go through with it without showing anything but gaiety and friendly interest. Now I felt that I must get it over with in a hurry. I made a reservation for the night train. Then I went back to the little flat.

"*Grand Frere!*" the two girls cried at sight of me. They always called me *Grand Frere* now. They sprang to their feet and kissed me on both cheeks, just as they would have greeted any cousin or aunt or uncle. They barely touched the cheeks with their lips and made no sound. I remembered that once I had ridiculed the French habit of cheek-kissing, and Madeleine had said,

"It is better than your American way of backslapping. And it does not hurt as your way of hand-gripping sometimes does. We have never kissed anyone on the lips. We never shall until we are betrothed. Such kissing is a pledge for all our days."

Now a moth brushing my cheeks could not have touched them more lightly than Madeleine's kisses had touched them. Thank God! It was only I to whom this

parting loomed as the end of the most beautiful experience of life!

I told them I was leaving at eleven o'clock that night. That seemed to shock them for a moment, but for a moment only. Madeleine turned away and ran to the kitchen. For an instant I thought she was turning away to hide tears. But in a minute she came out with bright smiles and a big basket.

"We must have a gay dinner of farewell!" she cried.

"You bet we must!" I agreed. "I'll go with you to get it. Wait until I stow my gear in my room."

I carried my bag to my room. There, propped against the mirror was a letter from the girl back home. I did not want to open it but felt I must. I opened it and sat stunned.

It was a furious letter. I had to read it twice before I could imagine what it was about. It seemed that Otto Higgins of *The Star* had written her, replying to a letter, something which made her think I had told him about our quarrels concerning a captain Higgins knew but whom I had never seen. She had met the captain while writing a magazine article about a training camp and when he learned she yearned to go to France as a correspondent he had told her he could get her attached to his regiment as its historian. I did not believe that and suspected the captain of being a scamp, but she believed it and was entranced by him, dropping everything else to meet him for several private conferences. The climax had come when he had telegraphed her to meet him in the Union Station at about noon and they had conferred for about ten hours. For a week after that she had been terribly depressed.

I did not suspect her of any impropriety. She was fond of dramatizing herself with an air of mystery. But I thought she really was in love with the captain and was grieving because he was going away. He was married, but she did not know that until two years later. I had never mentioned the captain to Higgins nor to anyone, so her letter now bewildered me. Apparently she was receiving no replies to her letters to the captain and had written Higgins to ask about him. As I did not dream she was still corresponding with the captain, or even with Higgins, whom I rarely saw, I had no idea what she had written him nor what he had replied. But whatever he had written had made her leap to the utterly baseless conclusion that I had told him about our quarrels, and it made her furious. The letter I now held was full of violent accusations, concluding with the underscored words: "If you have been guilty of this crowning poltroonery I'm THROUGH."

I was eager to let it go at that, but felt I must return to ask her, face to face, to release me from my pledge. Her letter, and some other recent letters from her, had indicated that she would be glad to do so. Besides, I had no way of making a living in France. Maybe I could return to France after once things at home were settled, but now I must go home.

I went out to join the girls, feeling strangely buoyant. Of course, I said nothing of the letter, but for the first time in two weeks I was gay. Felix Potin's big market was nearby. I carried the market basket into it and paid the bills, and the clerks thought I was the husband of one of the girls. The girls laughed so brightly at that mistake that it was clear they had never thought of me in that way.

It was a gay dinner we had back in the little flat, including a bottle of good champagne. As the three French women never drank more than one glass of wine, one bottle was enough.

I promised I would write and they promised they would write. I vowed that I would return when I could, though I feared it would not be for a long time. They drank to my good fortune and speedy return.

Only once did I grow pensive, thinking how long it might be and what tragic things might happen in the meantime. Madeleine saw the passing cloud on my face and filled my glass.

"You must not—must not—worry about us," she declared. "We are capable and we are eager to work. *Le Bon Dieu* certainly shall find us some opportunity. He always has."

"Here's to it!" I cried, draining the glass and brightening again.

We took a taxi to the station, arriving at a quarter to eleven. It was a little harder to keep the gay notes in our conversation then. We had said everything we could say, and I could not say the things I wanted to say.

The last call for the train came, and all of us still were smiling. I kissed Madame on the cheeks in farewell. Then I kissed Georgette on the cheeks and jokingly told her she must hurry and marry a rich man, so they could all come to America.

Then I turned to Madeleine. I would delicately touch her cheeks with my lips and give her some similar command. But Madeleine's gaze locked with mine as I stepped toward her, and suddenly she took my face in both her hands and kissed me full on the lips.

I do not know what happened after that. Through my mind, like vivid lightning, flashed the recollection that once she had said she would never kiss any man on the lips until it meant a pledge of love. But the only thing I distinctly recall was that the train caller, who had known for fifteen minutes that I was taking that train, seized my arm and shouted:

"Vite! Vite! Vite! Le train marche!"

"To hell with it!" I said joyously. "I'll take the morning train."

Part Two

FRIENDS IN NEED

WHEN MADELEINE AND I WERE married we had one another, and very little more. I had resigned from *The Star,* with vague ideas of writing a book, but I wanted to expose what seemed to me the criminal follies of wars, and the editors thought America was sick of anything dealing with war. I stubbornly wrote and made speeches in favor of the League of Nations, but was sliding down hill financially. And then our son Henry was born.

I heard that Tampico, Mexico, was a place in which anyone could get a job at good pay. Truck drivers there were getting $400 a month, plus board, room and laundry, and everything else was in proportion. For Tampico had become the capital of the oil world.

Arthur Brisbane had told me once that if he ever yearned for new ideas he would go to some new place, for new impressions were always most vivid. Mexico might give me the inspiration for that book I meant to write some day. I borrowed money to get to Tampico, stopping in Monterrey to arrange for Madeleine and her

mother and the baby to locate there temporarily, as both yellow fever and bubonic plague were ravaging Tampico. That was one reason why wages were high. My old newspaper friend, Thomas D. Bowman, was American Consul in Monterrey. Tom and his wife and their French and English Consuls kindly took my family under their wings and found an apartment for them in the home of a respected German family, and I went on to Tampico.

Tampico then was the wildest town in North America. The greatest oil gushers discovered up to that time had been discovered there. E. L. Doheny's Cerro Azul No. 4 tested as capable of producing 264,000 barrels in a day and flowed an average of more than 50,000 barrels daily for eight years. Los Naranjos No. 4 of the British Shell interests seemed as big or possibly bigger, though definite figures were not made public. So many huge wells were brought in that one capable of only 40,000 barrels daily was reported as "a small well."

Mexico might be a land of flowers and music, adventure and romance, but I did not find Tampico romantic. It was dirty and smelly and sordid. Ten thousand Americans and English, with high wages to spend, were there, but there were very few American or British women. Its bars, gambling halls and La Plaza Union were its chief places of amusement. Plaza Union was the red light district, in which sailors and ship officers from every land which sent tankers to Tampico could find at least one or two showily dressed women who spoke their language. Its dance halls were all open to the street, and around each was a hedge of men, staring shrewdly or hungrily at the enticing women dancers. Some of the men were booted and oil-spattered, in from the fields for a day or two. Some were sailors or ship officers in strange uni-

forms. Some were oil company executives or office employees showing visiting stockholders or business visitors from the States or other countries the most bizarre district, I imagine, then to be found on this continent. And several thousand were Mexican peons or laborers who stood transfixed, gazing at white-skinned women whose silken dresses were cut to reveal rather than hide, as if they were seeing wonders from another world.

The street cars running to Plaza Union carried red lanterns fore and aft instead of name signs. The place was so famous that it was not unusual for the most respectable of the foreigners there to hire *coches* and drive their wives and most respected visitors through it, to satisfy their curiosity.

But reports of fabulous wages had brought far more men swarming to Tampico than could find jobs, and panhandlers were numerous. Yet money was so easy for those who had it that when one was asked for "the price of a cup of coffee" it was customary to give a dollar, not a dime.

My first day there, I was promised a job as assistant manager and publicity man for the American Chamber of Commerce. But that offer had to be confirmed when the directors met next week and my pay would not start until two weeks after I went to work. All my life I had been a shoestring Charlie, but I half-feared that that time my shoestring would hang me. I had only eighteen dollars on which to live for more than two weeks, in a community in which living cost the average American nearly that much a day.

While in Monterrey I had pounded my portable typewriter, producing a short story and three articles which might interest magazines. I had mailed them to Homer

Croy, asking if he would try to sell them and send me any proceeds in care of the American Consulate there.

The day after I got to Tampico Eddie Doherty of the *Chicago Tribune* arrived there to take a job on the *Tampico Tribune*. Much later Eddie was to win repute as a magazine correspondent in World War II and as an author of books and the screen story of "The Fighting Sullivans," but then he was thinking of becoming a junior partner in the *Tampico Tribune*, which was very prosperous. Eddie had come ahead, leaving his wife and baby in Chicago, but one look at the night life of the town was enough for him, and he and I became buddies, spending our evenings together studying Spanish.

By the third evening we had become confidential friends, and Eddie urged that I be his guest for dinner. Twice before he had suggested that we dine together and I had found excuses. The fact was that I was eating only one meal a day, at the cheapest restaurant I could find.

"I'm a whimsical eater," I laughed. "I eat at odd times, when the impulse seizes me. So I've already eaten dinner." I ate my daily meal at noon.

Eddie studied me. "You're lying," he said. "Why?"

I laughed again. "None of your damned business," I said, "but I might as well be frank. I borrowed money to come to Mexico. I have obligations back in the States. I'm not even sure of a job until the directors meet. I have to live skimpily until I'm on my feet."

Eddie puffed his pipe pensively. Then he said:

"I don't know what your obligations are. But I've sold some property in Chicago. I could let you have anything up to four thousand dollars."

I was stunned, for he meant it. For a man I had known only three days, in a land full of sharpers of all kinds, many of them extradition dodgers from the States, to make such an offer bucked up my morale amazingly. I laughed the offer off, but agreed that if actual hunger threatened I would tap him for a small loan.

I almost had to tap him, for I was down to my last fifty centavos when a plain envelope, addressed to me and bearing a New York postmark, arrived at the Consulate forwarded from the Monterrey Consulate. I opened it and found a check signed by Charles Phelps Cushing. Charlie was a former *Star* man who had been acting managing editor of *Collier's* at the start of the war and later, in France, censor of news photographs and captions. I assumed he had returned to some editorial position and had bought one of the manuscripts I had sent to Croy.

Next day a similar plain envelope awaited me at the Consulate. In it was a check signed by Courtney Ryley Cooper. Again there was no letter nor word of explanation. Courtney was another former *Star* man whose circus stories and animal stories in the better magazines had won him wide repute. I was surprised to see that, apparently, he too had become an editor and bought something of mine.

Next day I found still another envelope with no return address at the Consulate. It, too, contained a check, and then I smelled the rat. The check was signed by Steven Doughton. Steve was a New York advertising man, and I knew I had not written anything which he might have bought. It was easy to reconstruct the crime. Croy had met those old friends at the Players Club in New York and told them I had ventured into Mexico without adequate funds. They had put no return addresses on the

envelopes because they did not wish me to know how to address them. They did not wish me to look on the checks as loans, but were tossing them out as possible lifesavers, knowing I probably would think they were for something of mine they had bought.

In a month I was able to send Croy a draft to repay all those fine fellows, but I can never cease to be grateful to them. Those three checks and Eddie Doherty's generous offer put steel in my spine—and gold in my heart.

Many persons wonder what is the lure of the newspaper game. For nine-tenths of those in it, it is a poorly paid vocation, and most of their work is anonymous. Only a few win fame. I believe the basic lure is the opportunity it offers for being kind and doing good. Hard-boiled reporters cherish faith that if the light is turned on properly it will be good for their neighbors, their cities, their states, their nation and their world. They often find great happiness in reaching out into the dark, as Butts did, to help strangers, or to bring submerged merit to light. They often glory in a chance to battle intrenched wrong. They pretend to have no feelings, but I never yet knew one well who was not secretly glad of some act of astonishing generosity or even nobility which he would blush if he had to admit. All in all, and by and large, I think they are the finest lot of unmercenaries in the world.

SHORTLY AFTER I WENT TO Tampico, the manager of a store in Monterrey assured Madame Babin that in Mexico City her costume creations could be sold as "latest Paris designs," which would be justified as she was almost direct from Paris and had designed models for leading dressmakers. That convinced Madame that the climate of Mexico City would suit her and Madeleine a great deal better, and they moved.

In Tampico I took on all the jobs I could get. Besides my Chamber of Commerce job, I became correspondent for several newspapers in the United States, filling my evenings and weekends with gainful toil. And then came Señor Encino.

He was dapper and the last word in pretty manners. In New York he had got the idea that wealth, power and the favors of lovely actresses went to newspapers owners. When he inherited money, he bought a Spanish-language paper, with a pony wire service. He argued that by hiring translators he could also publish an English-language daily. Ten thousand Americans and English in the oil fields would welcome it, as Texas papers were three days

stale when they reached us. The *Tampico Tribune* was a weekly and had no wire service.

Encino hired me to edit his English edition, boss of everything except the editorials, and the business office. I could leave the newspaper office every afternoon at 3:30 and work for the Chamber of Commerce the rest of the afternoon and evening. As I had no family life and couldn't play poker well enough to shine in the social life about me—and also needed the money—that was perfect.

The new paper was a sellout from the start. Encino and his business manager celebrated with dinner to the leading women of a theatrical troupe from Mexico City, a dinner at which they scorned any wine costing less than eight dollars a bottle—and there were lots of bottles.

That was excusable for once, but we soon saw Encino intended to make a career of it. He had a fine car, wore good clothes beautifully and was the most promising young business man in town, his trouble being that he rarely made good his promises. In a few days I learned that most of his Mexican employees had no idea how much he owed them. When a reporter or printer asked him for money he would slap the man on the back affectionately, invite him to dinner and a gay evening in Plaza Union, give him ten or twenty pesos on account and assure him he would have plenty of money in a few days. Next day the employee would have only a hazy recollection of what had happened. Encino's composing room foreman told me Encino owed him about two thousand pesos in delinquent wages, but he did not know how much and would gladly settle for half of what he thought the amount should be.

The paper was but a week old when one of the translators turned over a story telling how General Arnulfo

Gomez had led a gallant force out into the *monte,* or jungle, and exterminated a band of rebels. It chanced that I, in line with my Chamber of Commerce duties, had had to confer with General Gomez at the very time when he was supposed to have won that victory and knew the story was fictitious. When I told that to Encino he smiled blandly.

"Those boys don't get paid much," he said. "Sometimes I let them write a story, and show it to the person written about. If he likes it, and is willing to pay for it, we run it. Or, if he doesn't like it, and is willing to pay for it, we don't run it. It is a custom."

I insisted on hiring two reporters of my own. But the author telegraphed that baseless fiction to a Mexico City paper which accepted it as truth. I do not think General Gomez was any more responsible than Hollywood actors and many American politicians are for helpful fictions their publicity men invent. But Gomez became so prominent that, later on, he seemed to be the leading candidate for President of Mexico. He was assassinated out of the race, however. In Mexico, at that time, the paths of glory often led to the grave.

As nearly as I could figure it, Encino should have been able to pay all salaries and make a profit of several hundred dollars a week. But Encino would never pay anything today which he could promise to pay *mañana.* The two reporters I hired were the only ones who got their pay every week.

Tampico was then the most American city outside the United States. There was an American school, two American banks and even a baseball league, made up of seven oil company teams and one representing the Banque Francaise du Mexique. That was entirely made up of

Mexicans, some being professional players imported from Texas, and its ability to beat some of our teams at our national pastime thrilled the Tampiquenos. I believe it was that team which started the vogue for baseball in Mexico.

The *Tampico Tribune* had grown with the oil boom. Charles McC. Anderson, its owner, was a director of the Chamber of Commerce and of one of the banks, and both American banks gave most of their business to his paper, carrying only small cards in ours. That infuriated Encino, though he never thought of patronizing either American bank.

One of the oil company teams tied with the Mexican team for the baseball league championship, and there had to be a play-off game. Clarence Folsom, an American lawyer who spoke Spanish so well and knew Mexican law so well that many Mexicans were afraid of him, came by in a taxi to ask me to go to the playoff game. I was so eager to go that I put the paper to bed a few minutes earlier than usual, looked over the first copy off the press to see that all was well, and went with him.

When the game ended, boys selling our papers were at the exits. I bought a paper, and one glance showed me the first page had been made over. Then I saw why. A small but prominent news item said it was rumored that one of the American banks in Tampico was in financial trouble.

That, I was convinced, was blackmail, an effort to show the two banks they had better advertise with us, or else. And I was responsible for all the news items in the paper. I hurried Folsom into a taxi and we went to look for Encino.

When we found him he was perfectly suave and innocent. He said it was news he had heard after I had left the office, and he and the business manager had thought it justified stopping the press and remaking the front page. He could not understand why I was angry, and seemed to have no idea of the ruin he might bring on one or both the banks. He was hurt that I, to whom he had always been fair, should question his motives.

"Because I think it blackmail, based on falsehood," I said fiercely. "I'm here to resign, immediately."

As I spoke, Folsom glared. Encino was not offended. He shrugged and opened his safe. He owed me sixteen hundred pesos, and he counted out the entire amount in gold. Annoyed by the common use of United States money, Mexico had just adopted a law requiring that all salaries be paid in Mexican money, and all Mexican money then was gold or silver.

I went out jingling like Santa Claus. Next morning I went to the Tampico Banking Company and Folsom to the Petroleum Bank, before either opened, to tell our story to anyone who might be alarmed. We had also informed Robert E. Sweeney, manager of the American Chamber of Commerce to spread the news.

Early though I was, a crowd was already forming at the Tampico Banking Company when I arrived. As the community regarded me as the editor, I was immediately asked which bank was in trouble.

"Neither," I declared, patting my jingling pocket. "I'm here to deposit this money, and tell you all what happened, so you can tell others."

When the bank opened I was the first to enter it. A few watched curiously as I deposited my gold, then went away. There was no run on either bank.

Next day I left for Mexico City. For weeks Madeleine and I had a wonderful reunion in that fascinating old city. But no decent job offered there. Living was cheap, but salaries were only a third what similar jobs brought in Tampico. And even the Yanks in Mexico City had become so Mexicanized that they couldn't say no. They would merely say *mañana.* Persons who did not dream of offering me anything acceptable would invite me to luncheon and talk as if they were bending every effort, and were sure that in a few days they could slip me into just the spot I wanted. The mere thought of frankly telling me there wasn't a chance of my earning anything like what I felt I should earn there was shocking. It was so much more polite to let a man grow discouraged and broke by inches.

At first they raised my hopes so high that I spent freely. Then I found myself running short of money, and wrote Charlie Anderson of the *Tampico Tribune,* asking if he could give me a job. No reply. Two weeks passed and I was nearly broke.

"We're going to Tampico," I announced. "The bubonic and yellow jack are under control now, and it will be all right for the baby."

"But suppose we get stranded there."

"You don't know Tampico. The Americans there wouldn't let anyone down if he had made good there."

We packed up and left. We arrived in Tampico with just one double peso, worth one dollar. We had a *cargedor* carry our trunk up to the best Mexican hotel. So many broke Americans had arrived there, confident of getting jobs which were already gone, that the three American hotels demanded payment in advance. I gave the cargedore that last peso.

It must have given Madeleine a queazy feeling to know we were broke in a town strange to her and depressing after the loveliness of Mexico City, and my first hope was a man who had not replied when I wrote asking for a job. But she did not show it. We washed up and went to call on Charlie Anderson.

"Charlie," I said, "I'd like you to meet my wife and baby—and lend me a hundred pesos—and give me a job."

"Glad to meet the wife," said Anderson, shaking hands. "Glad to lend the pesos. But I've just hired a good man named Berdie. That's why I didn't answer your letter. I'm overstaffed now."

"Well, any suggestions? I've surely got to get a job."

"Oh, all right. Come around tomorrow and go to work."

That was the Tampico way then. Why worry about saving a few hundred dollars a month if you could help a fellow you like by spending it? Men who might have been enemies at home had become their brothers' keepers in a foreign land. The loyalty of the entire Yank colony to any other Yank they felt deserved loyalty was a beautiful thing. But that thought raised a qualm.

"I suppose the opposition will accuse me of shameful disloyalty," I said.

"Oh, haven't you heard?" asked Anderson. "There isn't any opposition. That piece about the banks hurt a lot. Then Encino tried a different tack. He published a piece saying the paper had been given evidence of corruption in high places, and would feel it its duty to investigate and publish the facts. No one had any idea what that meant, but the Governor took no chances. A file of soldiers seized the plant. The doors were padlocked and the editors thrown in jail. Yesterday, after being there a

month, they were released on their pledge never again to publish a newspaper in any language."

In Mexico City, as my funds had shrunk, I had often wondered if I had not been quixotic in flinging away a good job. Encino knew so little of journalism standards that he might not have realized what he was doing when he published that "rumor" about the banks. But now I realized that Encino had done me a great favor in making it impossible for me to remain as editor. I would have passed that item about corruption in high places without question. The American Chamber of Commerce was bitter about the disappearance of funds for which special taxes had been levied. And had I passed it I probably would have been the Number One man put in jail.

REPORTS OF HIGH WAGES HAD drawn so many more men to Tampico than could find jobs that some who were too proud to beg died of starvation in the streets. Disappointment of high hopes made some seek consolation in pulque, mescal, tequila and narcotics, and become pitiful derelicts. For eight years there had been no government stable enough to win recognition from the United States, and other nations had waited for the lead of the United States. As one result, there were no extradition treaties, and fugitives from the United States and some other nations had flocked to Mexico. As money was easier in Tampico than anywhere else, most of them had headed for Tampico. Easy money, easy climate, and easy government had led to easy morals.

Once a member of the American Consulate staff led me to a window from which he could point out a dozen Americans who were hiding in doorways, waiting to intercept some oil man, ship captain or business man headed for the Consulate and beg "the price of a meal" —which meant the price of cocaine.

"I'm sure they're all dope addicts," he said, "But we can't do anything until we have proof."

I tried to save some drifters by starting a free employment bureau. I card-indexed the qualifications and addresses of men seeking employment. But soon the supply was tragically greater than the demand. Only those who seemed exceptional had any chance.

One who seemed exceptional bore impressive references from two great business organizations in the States. He was handsome, pleasing and quietly assured, could speak French and German fluently and was confident he could learn Spanish in two weeks. He had the educational background which made that seem possible. An oil company with international dealings needed just such a man as secretary to the manager. I got the young fellow the job, at handsome pay.

Three days later the oil executive was enthusiastic. Intelligent. Sharp. Present-minded. Just what he wanted. But a week later he wasn't so sure. His secretary came to work looking as if he had had a rough night. The company had him watched. Curiosity had led the young fellow to try strange drinks and strange experiences. Then he had vanished.

The oil executive came to me, but I had no clue. Together we went to the American Consulate, with the young man's picture and personnel file.

Vice-Consul John D. Hickerson was making a specialty of such cases, if action seemed warranted. In that case it was. An American citizen whose career seemed promising had disappeared and there might have been foul play. Hickerson asked the cooperation of the Mexican police and military, and in a few days the young man was in jail. Then the Consulate got in touch with the boy's rela-

tives in the States. Every day tankers left Tampico for New Orleans, New York and other ports, and it would be easy to have the derelict shipped to the port most convenient for his relatives. It was usual to ship such men in irons, to prevent escape or suicide, and for their relatives, accompanied by medical authorities, to meet them when they landed.

Such jobs often took Hickerson into disgusting jails to meet disgusting characters. But I know he saved a number of young Americans, who had just started on the downward path, from a fate worse than death.

Hickerson was naturally kind and courteous, and got along wonderfully with the Mexican officials. But the drug peddlers, on whom there was practically no restraint, hated him, and so did some of the Yanks he tried to save. They thought they would rather die than go home.

Hickerson was so confidential about that part of his duties that I would not have known of it but for my connection with the Chamber of Commerce. Saving some Americans from living death was just a routine part of his duties and not to be mentioned except to persons directly involved. Thirty years later, when I read press dispatches of conferences between Assistant Secretary of State John D. Hickerson and the premiers of England and France, I felt serene confidence that America's best interests, as well as those of humanity, were being safeguarded by a mighty good man.

I'm ashamed to admit that when I first entered Mexico I shared the common American habit of undervaluing our diplomatic service. On the border, I had met numerous Americans who declared that if they got into trouble in Mexico they would claim to be British, be-

cause the British consuls protected their nationals far better than American consuls did. The very next day two of those big talkers got in trouble in Monterrey. It was their own fault—they were disgustingly drunk and abusive—but it was Consul Thomas D. Bowman who got them out of jail and sent them on their way with good advice. Since then I have seen American consuls in several nations go far beyond the call of duty to help traveling Americans, and have seen American diplomacy lead the whole world both in efforts for world peace and in war. At a baseball game, most Americans fervently cheer for the home team, even when it is losing. In the World Series of international affairs too many of us seem inclined to underestimate the home team, even when it is winning.

Indeed, after visiting quite a number of countries, I am inclined to think the American tourist is the only deplorable ambassador we have. Too many of us do things far from home which we wouldn't dream of doing where we have reputations to uphold. Too many of us seem to think ability to spend freely entitles us to indulgences for all sorts of sins and vulgarities. In Tampico, where all the popular vices flourished unrestrained at that time, and where even the American beggars had money with which to pursue them, a good many Americans got into quicksands before they realized it. But very few sank, because a devoted and intelligent American Consulate staff was standing by as lifeguards.

THE CHAMPION BANDIT

THOUGH I GREW UP IN THE area which produced Jesse James, I think Monte Michaels, or a man who went by that name in the Tampico area whether or not it was his, had the James boys beaten for number and magnitude of crimes, and possibly for stratagems which might have changed the map of North America.

Monte had become king of the oil fields before I got there, and fantastic legends had grown up about him. He was tall, handsome, black-haired and black-eyed. He spoke Spanish perfectly, as a Mexican would, but was said to have come from Texas. He did not smoke nor drink, but on occasions he and his gang would take over some sequestered village in the lower oil fields and operate bars and brothels without charge for the night, inviting the whole community to a free fiesta.

No doubt such reports were greatly exaggerated but they made the chiefs of great oil operations wonder where Monte got his money. He had no visible means of support and the wild celebrations of his gang always seemed to come on the heels of a big payroll robbery.

But such suspicions were only whispered, and for years there was no proof of them.

The oil fields spread over ten thousand square miles, and many of the camps were so lost in the brush that one needed a guide to find them. It cost a hundred thousand dollars or more to sink a prospect hole in any new fields. First men with machetes had to cut a path through the underbrush which often was pure jungle. Then trees had to be felled and stumps pulled and rocks blasted. Then a dirt road solid enough to stand up under huge, heavily-laden trucks had to be built and lines laid to some constant source of water, which might be more than a mile away. Derrick timbers had to be hauled in, derricks built, huge boilers to provide steam power had to be installed and some sort of living quarters for the drilling crew erected before drilling could start.

Such a wildcat operation was likely to be miles from any other camp or settlement. Yet the men had to be paid every two weeks. If a payroll was sent with an armed guard of a dozen men they might all be ambushed and not one left to tell the tale. Sometimes a scout or geologist used to traveling about alone might carry as much as a hundred thousand pesos in gold in his saddlebags and be unsuspected. But the bandits seemed to have their own intelligence service, and once such a trick was discovered or even suspected that scout or geologist would be courting death every time he ventured into the woods.

When I first reached Tampico United States money was in general use, but soon afterward Mexico made it unlawful to use any but Mexican money. Through eight years of revolutions, every general controlling an area printed his own money, and no one would take Mexican paper money now. Therefore all payrolls had to be made

in gold and silver, for men in outlying camps could not cash checks. It wasn't easy to hide from sixty thousand to twice that much in gold. Sometimes as many as five payrolls would be captured in a week, despite all the efforts of guards and strategists, and frequently the carriers were murdered.

All the robberies appeared to be the work of unknown Mexican bandits, for what survivors there were all reported that the bandits spoke Spanish. But the whisper spread that Michaels was the bandit king.

Legend said Monte had arrived on horseback and without passports. A New York syndicate owned a wildcat lease which was incomplete because one of the heirs to the property had not been located. Michaels and his gang had seized the property, declaring they had leased it from the missing heir. That had been years before, when the commanding general in each district was all the law there was. And Michaels, it was said, had formed a partnership with one such general.

Four mysterious strangers appeared in Zacamixtle, a town in the lower field which Michaels often visited. They didn't act like oil scouts, and they asked too many questions. They were in a *cantina* one day when Michaels entered, walked straight up to them and said:

"So you're gunmen, hired to kill me? I'll give you two hours to get out of town alive."

He slapped the closest man, contemptuously turned his back and strode out. None of the strangers reached for a gun, perhaps believing Monte's friends in the crowd had them covered. Two of them announced their resignations, for all in earshot to hear. The other two took another drink and strode out to look for Monte. Next day

the two were buried together. No one seemed to know who killed them.

Suddenly a derrick appeared on the land Michaels was holding by force. Then a boiler began to sing and a drill began to thud. That was mystifying, for no one had sold Michaels timbers, boiler nor drill, and there was no road to his camp which trucks could travel. Then it was discovered that a derrick and boiler had disappeared from another operation which had been abandoned. But there was no use going to law about such things in that area at that time.

The well came in. The test showed it capable of producing sixty thousand barrels daily. All through the area it was customary for the big companies which owned pipelines to extend feeder lines to such wildcat wells, paying ten cents a barrel for the oil at the mouth of the well. That would mean six thousand dollars a day for Michaels.

But the companies which suspected, but could not prove Michaels had been robbing them, had been waiting for that. None would buy the oil, and it would cost far more than Michaels could raise to get it out in any other way. He had to cap his well and fume at those who, he declared, were robbing him of six thousand dollars a day.

That, his apologists said, was what had turned Michaels into an avenging devil. If he couldn't collect in one way he would in another.

Payroll robberies became so frequent that the International Petroleum Company, the John Hays Hammond interests, built a railroad to transport its payrolls to its principal fields. It was easy to ambush horsemen in the woods but a train, carrying armed guards, was a rolling fortress. Payrolls sent by train seemed so safe that other

companies suggested the line be turned into a belt line, serving their camps also.

Then the International's pay train was dynamited, and seven men were killed.

Patrick M. Longan of Pasadena was the company's manager in Tampico. I was with him when news of that crime arrived. Longan was a big man, and he looked twice as big as he arose, shaking with passion, and raised a clenched fist above his head.

"By God," he vowed, "I'm going to put an end to this butchery! I'm going to see justice done, if God will let me live!"

Great financial organizations often can do things which diplomacy and national self-righteousness cannot. Shortly afterward the military commander in that area was suddenly removed. His successor apparently was reporting directly to President Obregon. Previously most crimes out in the *monte*, or jungle, had been shrugged off as the work of unidentifiable *sin verguenzas* or shameless ones, as roving bandits were called. The new commander ordered that Michaels and his men be brought in for questioning. All that the detachment sent for them found was a deserted camp.

Up in Texas, two Yank ex-service men were arrested on suspicion of bootlegging, but three days later they were in jail in Tuxpam, a hundred miles south of Tampico. They sent word to the American Legion in Tampico that they were innocent men who had been unlawfully kidnapped in Texas, and the Legion investigated. Not only was there no extradition treaty but there was no record of the arrest of the men in Texas and no record that they had crossed the border, with or without guards. It seemed a case in which the laws of two nations had been set aside. But the

Legion decided it had been done in the interest of justice.

The men in jail weren't depressed. They boasted that Monte would get them out of there. And Monte, or somebody, did. There was a jail break, and the suspects vanished. But things were different now. Every military outfit and police outfit in that part of Mexico was on the alert, and two Yank fugitives in an alien land could not long be hidden. In a few days they were recaptured, and International's detectives confronted them with so much evidence that they confessed, implicating others who were picked up and confessed. Soon Longan had seven dovetailing confessions which left no doubts in his mind. They all agreed that Michaels had planned the dynamiting and had set the charge.

By that time Michaels had vanished and his gang had scattered. But Monte had been such a king for years that he still was spoken of with awe and respect.

The Doheny interests had several thousand employees and raised food for them on a farm near Ebano. A former Texas Ranger named Watts managed the farm. A *sin verguenza* known as General Larraga was reported to be raiding near the farm, and the Doheny interests appealed to the army for protection. Eighty soldiers were sent to Ebano, and raiding ceased.

The farm staff had gone into Ebano for protection. But when all seemed quiet, Watts drove out to inspect the farm. There was a big dance in Ebano that night, and the farm staff was invited, but Watts was more interested in the farm. He decided to spend the night there and lay out a work schedule for the other employees, who were due back next morning. He was making himself comfortable when three horsemen rode up in the dusk. One shouted in Spanish for him to come out.

"Who wants me?" Watts demanded.

"General Larraga."

There were several beds in the ranch house. Watts had begun pulling mattresses from them at first sight of the horsemen. He had no light and it was much easier to see outdoors than indoors.

"If Larraga wants me," he shouted, "he can come and get me."

The answer was shots. Bullets tore through the house. Watts, nursing a sawed-off shotgun, waited in silence behind a barricade of mattresses.

There were more shouts and more shots from outside. Then the crunch of boots outside the door, and the demand, in Spanish:

"Open, or I kick in the door." Watts made no reply.

The door was strong, but so was the man outside. A few powerful kicks crashed it in. Then a tall man strode into the doorway and stood there, clearly outlined by the waning light behind him yet contemptuous, arrogant and daring.

Watts mowed him down.

The big dance at Ebano started early, for many guests had come by boat from Tampico, twenty miles downstream and would have a long trip ahead of them after the party. The jazz orchestra was all but breaking its neck in contortions and gymnastics and the floor was a-swirl with dancers when Watts rushed in, panting and shouting:

"My God! I've killed Monte Michaels!"

The music stopped. Dancers and musicians all crowded about Watts. He told his whole story—how the man who had shouted in Spanish, kicked in the door, then stood in

the doorway, gun in hand but not shooting. Watts had fired, and the other horsemen galloped away.

The pretty stenographer of the American Chamber of Commerce was one of the dancers. She had a well-trained memory, for she relied on it almost as much as she did her shorthand. She had heard so much about Michaels that her keen curiosity made her ask many questions before officials of the Huasteca Company, the Mexican name of the Doheny interests, advised Watts to stop talking. Next morning she gave me the true story, just as Watts had blurted it out. A few hours later *El Mundo,* a Mexican newspaper, came out with an official report of the death of the man who had been uncrowned king of the oil fields for years. It told how the Mexican soldiers at Ebano, led by their gallant captain, had tracked Michaels down and killed him. No mention of Watts nor the Huasteca farm.

I went to Colonel Bill Green, manager of the vast Doheny interests in the oil fields. Green looked me in the eyes and vowed that all he knew of the incident was what he had read in *El Mundo.* At that moment he had Watts in hiding and had arranged to spirit him out of Mexico on a tanker. Michaels had been such a power, and had such dangerous friends, that Green did not want it known that any employee of his had destroyed him.

That official report published in *El Mundo* went on to Mexico City and from there was telegraphed to the United States by American wire services. I wrote the true story for the *Houston Chronicle,* the *San Antonio Light* and the *Tampico Tribune.* But as the *Tribune* was a weekly and the Texas papers did not reach Tampico until three days after publication, Tampico did not see the true story until four days after the shooting. But no one

denied it, for by that time nearly everyone in the American and British colonies knew it was true.

The last scenes in the drama of Monte Michaels were all that he could have wished. His body lay in state in front of the Palacio Municipal, or city hall, for two days with a line of awed persons continually passing to stare at the famous man. In the meantime, talk of Michaels at the Colonial Club, largely made up of men whose companies Michaels was supposed to have robbed, had brought out so many stories of his daring, his cleverness, his command of situations, that the feeling grew it would be a shame to let him be buried in the potters' field. The hat was passed. The best in caskets and undertaking services were engaged. A lot in the American cemetery was purchased. And many members of the club marched, bareheaded, behind the casket to the cemetery, where the grave still may be seen.

I barely knew Michaels, but learned much about him from men who knew him as well as anyone there could. I am convinced that when he kicked in that door, and stood in the doorway, gun in hand but not shooting, he was committing suicide. For years he had gloried in his power. At least one general had taken orders from him and some oil company magnates had been almost obsequious to him. There were rumors that Michaels had been dazzled, when Mexico was hopelessly torn by revolutions, by a dream of starting another which would split off that enormously rich part of the country, just as Texas once had been split off, with him as the Sam Houston of that independent nation. I do not know that such visions ever got beyond the day-dream stage. But I do know that some of Monte's American admirers were continually whispering that such a revolt should be started, and

that it took orders from the President of Mexico and a change of generals to break Monte's power. But then his gang had scattered, his reign had ended, he had had to join a *sin verguenza* of only local repute to hide from the law—and then, I believe, he had preferred death with his boots on to surrender and punishment.

GOOD OR BAD, ONE HAD TO BE strong to survive in Tampico. The morally weak could not stand the temptations, the physically weak could not stand the enervating climate and the dangers arising from inadequate sanitation. Yet the town was fascinating because of the strong men who made it what it was.

E. L. Doheny, for one, did not look like a strong man. He was small and quiet and ostensibly came to Tampico in his yacht only to enjoy tarpon fishing, the biggest tarpon on record having been caught in the Panuco River. But without Doheny's faith and obstinacy there would not have been a Tampico field. He had sunk eighteen dry holes and run so short of money that he was asking his employees to take their pay in stock before his venture began to pay. I think Doheny would have been glad to see some Sam Houston wrench that part of Mexico free and annex it to the United States, for he told me the nation controlling the most oil would win the next war, and he believed the Tampico field the greatest in the world.

Pat Longan, who had brought Monte Michaels to bay, looked very much the strong man. He was big and powerful. But C. W. Hamilton was another slender, quiet

man. When another company let a big hacienda lie undeveloped because geologists doubted that the oil-bearing structure extended into it, Hamilton got his company to offer to sink five prospect wells in it, one in each corner and one in the center, if the other company would divide it into twenty-eight lots and give Hamilton's company each alternate lot. Each "lot," of course, contained many acres. As such prospecting would cost half a million or more, the offer was accepted. Had that gamble failed to pay off, Hamilton might have been discredited. When he told me about it, his company had profited more than twenty million dollars by the deal.

Many scouts came in from jungles to the south with tales of Indian tribes which spoke no Spanish and worshipped idols and still used bows and arrows. Others found ruins of temples which indicated that prehistoric civilizations had risen to surprising achievements while the greater part of Europe still was inhabited by savages.

Despite all those fascinations, when Madeleine learned that the stork was coming again in August, she yearned to meet that bird in France or the United States instead of in Mexico.

We had never been handicapped by enervating and demoralizing security. We had had to keep on our toes all our lives. In Tampico we had what seemed security. Indeed, we had what seemed almost like wealth to a reporter. In seven months since we had returned from Mexico City we had lived comfortably, had two servants and saved money. When we checked up we found that we had saved enough to move to California and have a couple of thousand dollars left over.

My *Tribune* job, my Chamber of Commerce job and my correspondence for several newspapers in the United

States combined had made that possible. But I had no time left to write the things I wanted to write. I had wholly lost touch with the magazines which formerly had bought my wares, and still had never started to write a book. So we reluctantly said goodby to security and to good old Charlie Anderson and left for San Diego.

Before we arrived there, my mother and sister Virginia, who lived in Coronado then, had found an aged beach cottage at Del Mar which had a beautiful view. It also had holes in the roof through which one could have thrown a cat. But Mrs. Miles Standish, who did not live in Del Mar but was acting as agent for the property, said it could be bought for fourteen hundred dollars. That would leave us—we thought—enough to turn it into a comfortable camp, though one far from gas, electricity or telephone.

Anyone who has tried to revamp a dilapidated old cottage has some idea of what happened. I was almost incredibly awkward with saws, hammers and paint brushes, but had to do all I could, to put a tourniquet on the wallet. By the time the baby was born the interior of the cottage was crudely livable and I was stone broke as well as stone bruised in many places.

The roof still looked as if shrapnel had torn a dozen gaping holes in it. But Mrs. Standish had assured us no rain would come before October, probably not before November. And I was sure I could make enough to have a new roof before October.

The baby was born August first. We had arrived late in May, but as yet I had not unpacked my typewriter. Instead, I had been acting as assistant to Mr. Scripps, a dear old gentleman who belonged to a famous family but had had bad luck in the stock market, followed by illness, and

had been retired to that quiet spot as a sort of family pensioner. He had picked up carpentering as a hobby and was really very clever though also very slow. He was so intelligent he could figure out a way to do almost anything if you gave him time, and so patient and painstaking that he did it well. It was a pleasure and an education to work with him, something like sitting on one end of a log with a philosopher on the other end. His was often the shrewd philosophy of one who had no illusions but was the benign philosophy of one who had learned there is more satisfaction in doing small things well and kindly than in doing big things successfully but less kindly. By the time we could move into the cottage I was so broke I was smoking fig leaves instead of tobacco, but I had gained a lot by working with Mr. Scripps.

That was mid-August. With time and money both run out, I must get to work at once. There were six rooms in the house, and only the kitchen, living room and a bedroom were sketchily furnished. Our bed was only a bedspring with sawed pieces of two-by-four for legs. I chose an unused room for my ivory tower. My desk was an empty orange crate stood on end. But it was the moment I had dreamed of since I was fifteen, the time when I could devote all my time and thought to the composition of immortal literature. Each morning I must chop enough wood to keep the wood stove, through which the hot water pipes ran, going. I must do a little work in a vegetable garden, so we could eat even if checks were slow in coming, and there would be some few interruptions such as even the most considerate of young mothers would have to cause. But all the remainder of the day would be mine for the pursuit of Art.

It took all the first morning to set the stage and dream of future glory. After breakfast the second morning I retired to my ivory tower, set the typewriter on the orange crate, put paper into it—and then stared at the blank wall, wondering what I should write. In France and in Mexico I had thought a thousand times that when this moment came ideas would gush from me. But as I stared at the wall only one thought kept buzzing about my brain like a pestiferous but invisible horsefly—how the devil was I going to pay the milk bill? I could not swat it. I could not shoo it away. I gritted my teeth and tried to concentrate on other things, but it would not let me alone.

An hour passed and I had not written a word. I sat there deep in gloom, not realizing that it had become physical as well as mental. I had come there determined to write a book, and now I realized it would take a long time to write a book, while some income had to come at once. To make the house livable, I had spent all we had.

Through the thin walls I could hear Madeleine softly singing the baby to sleep. That shabby hut was home to her, the first bit of America we could call ours, and already she loved it almost as she loved the baby, visioning beautiful futures for both. I must not disappoint that faith.

I tried to shake off the gloom and suddenly realized it was actual. The sea which had been a shining thing of silver-spangled blue had grown black and sullen. The sky which had been cloudless azure had vanished behind threatening black curtains. And something was drumming on the roof.

The rain which could not possibly come before mid-October had come in mid-August.

Rain at that season was so unusual as almost to be historic. But that did not restrain it any. It was a deluge. It poured through the holes in the roof so that we had to set buckets, dish pans and other receptacles in a dozen places, and waterfalls tinkled merrily into all of them.

"What a joke," Madeleine cried, "on Mrs. Standish!"

The rain stopped as unexpectedly as it had started. It was only a squall which had blown in from the sea. The sun popped out, as smiling as a practical joker who has scored a perfect trick on a tenderfoot.

Next morning Madeleine came to my workroom as I was again staring at the wall.

"I've hired a Mexican girl to care for the baby this morning," she said. "I'm going to San Diego. I have to see your sister about something personal."

When she returned she handed me forty dollars.

"Get some shingles," she said, "and mend the roof. We may have some more unusual weather."

"As the man of the house," I said testily, "I prefer to do my own borrowing."

"I didn't borrow," she replied. "While we were in Coronado with your folks a friend of your sister's liked my party dress. A nursing mother has no use for a party dress, and silk deteriorates if it isn't used. I looked the lady up, and she was glad to buy it for forty dollars . . . Now, don't frown. You'll make plenty to buy me a better one long before I shall need one."

I did not frown, but I almost cried. She had sold the loveliest thing she owned.

I gave up trying to work for the day and went to buy shingles. I had no idea how to shingle a roof. I had to study what shingles were left to see how they were laid. The roof was so steep I tied one end of a rope around the

chimney, the other end around my waist, so that if I skidded on the roof I would not fall all the way. I also went to the railway station and bought a three-day insurance policy for a quarter.

I skidded several times, thumping heavily on the steep roof, and every time Madeleine ran out in alarm. But the rope always saved me, and before long the holes were all patched. It was a rough and amateurish job. But the roof never leaked again.

TO ANYONE WHO WISHES THE thrills and drama of living dangerously, I recommend freelance writing, with no other means of support. As a young reporter and as a country editor I had broken into the best magazines in America, including those which paid most and the one which, at that time, rated highest for literary quality. In fact, everything I had sold had appeared in the better magazines, nothing in what were called pulps. However, nearly five years had passed between the time of my departure for France and my return from Mexico, in which time I had wholly lost touch with the magazine market, and there had been great changes in editorial offices.

Always before I had been sure of almost enough income to meet my bills from my job or my newspaper, but now I had no income whatever except what I could earn by my typewriter. And writing is like golf—you can get pretty badly out of form in five years. That makes it all the more exciting.

For the freelance who must either sell something or give up eating, there are no dull moments. Every time he gets a promising idea he is thrilled. Every time he thinks

of an effective phrase or compelling sentence he exults like a fisherman who has hooked what he thinks must be a big one. Every time he completes a manuscript which seems to him completely good he sends it away with dreams of enthusiastic telegrams of acceptance. And every letter from an editor is opened with prayer.

It's like the Kentucky Derby. After weeks of wild hope it is all over in two minutes. And the news that you are just an also-ran hits your heart like a sledge-hammer. But, after all, there have been weeks of thrills, and only one crushing minute of defeat. Even then, you have the consolation of believing that the judges made a mistake or it was only because of some unfortunate accident that you did not win.

Realizing that it might take a year to write a novel, I decided to work on the novel from nine to twelve in the morning, on something which would earn quick money between one and four in the afternoon. Indeed, I had the whole day scheduled. The baby usually waked us by six in the morning, so that was rising time. After getting the stove going, I would work from half past six to half past seven in the vegetable garden. Then I would shave and bathe and we would breakfast from eight to nine. Luncheon was from twelve to one. At half past two Madeleine took the children to the beach, only a stone's throw from our door, and at four I would go there to join her for a plunge and then carry home the baby.

It was a wonderful life, but at first the only things that paid were the hours in the vegetable garden, the hours devoted to meals and the hours on the beach. When we gave a whole hour to any meal we always had much to talk about, for we developed the habit of conversation. Nowadays life is so full of complexities that often we eat

in twenty minutes and have very little conversation. I often wonder what time-savers buy one half as precious as the chats they lose.

Yet though those periods were unhurried, the things I was trying to write were hurried. The financial pressure was heavy on me, and both in France and in Mexico I had had to work fast. In Tampico I had held two jobs, each supposed to be a full-time job. Now, in a week, I had a short story ready to go, I thought, and sent it away with confidence to one of the magazines which formerly had bought my stuff.

It was returned with no comment, only a printed rejection slip.

Surprised and a little shocked by such lack of appreciation, I wrote another story, taking almost two weeks to polish and rewrite it. Then I generously gave the editors who had rejected the first story another chance. But that one, too, came back with a printed slip.

I felt I had been more than good to that publication, for old sakes' sake, so I bundled both stories off to other editors. But they, too, lacked appreciation.

For five months I wrote feverishly, without earning a dime. Five months is not long under some circumstances, but when one has a family to support it is a long time to go without money. If it had not been for the vegetable garden we would have gone hungry, for I was a stubborn Scot when it came to borrowing. For necessary medicines or anything equally important I was willing to borrow a few dollars from my mother and sister, and we bought milk, eggs and sometimes other farm produce from a farmer named Hillman, the only person with whom we ran a charge account. And Hillman, God bless him, was more than kind. Even when our milk bill got as high as

eighty dollars he kept right on delivering what we ordered and never pressed us for payment.

One day my mother came out to see us, carrying a sensational magazine. In the railway station, while waiting for the train, she had seen the magazine and had noticed that a story laid in Tampico was featured on the cover. Ordinarily, that particular magazine carried a cover somewhat like an illustration in *La Vie Parisienne*, but that one was different. Against a background of oil tankers and ships, it showed an alluring señorita struggling in the arms of a vicious character who apparently was bent on villainy, but a heroic young man was rushing to the rescue.

As I was aiming only at the better magazines, I had never wasted my limited vision on that one, but I read the yarn about Tampico, and was sure the author had never seen Tampico. It was a titillating story in which one expected rape or complete seduction to occur at any moment, but the two final paragraphs gave it a moral ending, so that it could go through the mails unchallenged.

I was disgustedly amused, but I was also desperate. I read other stories and thought I saw what was wanted. Next morning I started to write a wildly imaginative story like those. I was so eager to finish it and get to something decent that I did not stop for luncheon. By one o'clock it was finished and I reread it, correcting it in pencil. Then I addressed it to the editor of the magazine in which I had read the Tampico story, feeling it was practically an insult to any publication to submit such a story.

Almost instantly, I forgot that insult, for the baby got sick. There was no doctor in Del Mar then and we had to call a Dr. Gillespie from La Jolla, ten miles away. I suspect he doubted he would ever be paid, but doctors were

doctors in those days. He came twice a day and pulled the little fellow through. But asthma lingered as an after-effect of the illness, and often it seemed to us the little chap would choke to death.

"Asthma is whimsical," said Dr. Gillespie. "A move of even a mile often will prove beneficial. If you could get a mile or two back from the beach instead of being right on it, he might get relief."

When you have no money to rent nor to move with it almost makes you frantic to hear your doctor urge complete change, complete rest and complete relaxation. But when you have a sick baby you exhaust all possibilities. Two miles back on the mesa was a deserted shack, owned by an Italian named Bertoncini, a thrifty, honest, kindly man known to the entire community as "Bert." "Bert," God bless him, was willing to rent us the shack for $10, payable if and when, and also had a pickup truck in which he could transport the essentials for existence there.

The shack was in a little clearing on which chaparral was closing in. All night we could hear pack rats scurrying overhead and yapping coyotes killed rabbits on our very doorstep. But the baby slept sweetly all night long, and we were happy.

Every morning I wrote, as usual, and every afternoon walked to the post office to get my rejected manuscripts. That had been the routine for two weeks when one day, along with the manuscripts, I found an envelope with the return address of Walt Mason, the Rippling Rhymes poet. When I was on *The Star* I had grown friendly with Mason by letter but had never met him. Before I had moved to Del Mar he had settled in La Jolla, and when he had learned we were in Del Mar he and Mrs. Mason had called on us. They had invited us to visit them, but we

had never done so. Our one contact had been so brief and casual I was surprised to receive a letter from "Uncle Walt," but still more surprised when I opened it and read:

Dear Friend:

I hear you have sickness in your house. I know what that means. I hope the inclosure will not affront you in any way. You don't owe me anything. When on your feet, pass it on to the next fellow.

WALT MASON.

The inclosure was a check for fifty dollars.

I could easily reconstruct the crime. Mason had met Dr. Gillespie, who had remarked that he had to drive to Del Mar, where the baby of a poor devil who was trying to write was sick. Dr. Gillespie knew we were having a tough time of it. And dear old "Uncle Walt" had seen a chance to be kind.

It was like what Butts had done for me when I was blinded, like what Cooper and Cushing and Doughton had done for me when I first ventured into Mexico, like what Eddie Doherty had offered to do at that same time and what Charlie Anderson had done when I returned from Mexico City. It was part of the fellowship which used to be one of the golden things in the newspaper game. And it revived my spirit as rain revives a field which had seemed dying of drought.

I still have that check, with its story typed on its back, for I never had to cash it. That same mail brought acceptance of a story—the story I had written in such contempt and sent away in anger, thinking that it was almost an insult to the editor! And a check for eighty dollars was inclosed with the letter which invited me to submit more stories!

At last the world was mine! If I could write an eighty dollar story in four hours, why not write two of them in eight hours? And what couldn't we do with one hundred sixty dollars a day?

I have said the life of the freelance writer is the life of thrills, and few thrills equal that which comes with the first acceptance, or even the first after a long dry spell. But when I thought it over I realized I did not wish either of the two women I honored most, my mother and my wife, to read that story. Both would think I had debased whatever talents I had. If I could not write things which would be of some benefit to those who read, it would be better not to write at all. However, that eighty dollars was a lifesaver and I shall always be grateful to the editor who sent it to me.

WHEN WE KNEW OUR FIFTH baby was on the way, I began almost to worry. Adventuring into Mexico with only a typewriter with which to earn a living had been challenging and exciting. Freelancing at Del Mar with only one, two, three or four children, had been a series of minor triumphs, for every month we got by was a minor triumph. But another baby would bring the family up to seven, and freelancing for a small army, while it would provide the daily thrills of living dangerously, was something to ponder with a bit of awe. Our eldest son now was not yet seven years old and we still owed the doctor a few payments on our fourth son.

I had had to shelve my efforts at a novel and concentrate on things which could be written in a day or in a week or two. I decided "temporarily" to attempt nothing longer than novelettes, and most of what I wrote was much shorter. Yet I suddenly found myself treated with strange respect, even by the wealthy people who lived on the hill and who were a bit inclined to look down on our end of the village. I was asked to accept a place on the

school board, and some persons who had never noticed me before went out of their way to be courteous.

I couldn't understand it for quite a while, and when I did I just kept smiling modestly and made no explanation. Here is what happened: At that time I was on the regular contributing staff of *Life,* then a humorous weekly. Editor Tom Masson frequently sent me notices that on certain dates, a month or two in the future, *Life* would be interested in material of certain kinds. One such notice said that in a prospective issue *Life* would like paragraphs to fit the title, "Things We Shrink From Knowing." I had sent only two words, "ourselves" and "bores." *Life* had sent me a check for four dollars for the two words.

Winter Scripps, the dear old gentleman who had turned carpenter to occupy his time, was with me in the post office when I received that check and I had shown it to him, chuckling: "For once in my life, I've been paid two dollars a word." A day or two later Mr. Scripps had heard someone speak slightingly of my efforts and had casually remarked:

"Well, I happened to see one check he received the other day. He was paid two dollars a word."

His hearers stared in unbelief. Then someone asked: "How big was the check?"

"Oh, I just glanced at it," said Mr. Scripps. "I can't remember the figures but I can remember four."

Everyone who knew anything about me knew that I wrote hundreds of words daily. They also knew I got rejections frequently. But if, now and then, I got a check in four figures it would cover a multitude of failures.

Everyone in the village also knew of one article of mine, because it was about a local citizen. One bitter cold night Arlie Brown, a man of wealth and position, had

been asked for the price of a bed. That had been in Denver. Brown had asked why the man did not apply to this or that charity. The man replied that one closed its offices at five o'clock, and the other charged thirty-five cents a night for a bed. That had inspired Brown to tour the nation, dressed as a laborer. That is, he traveled from city to city by the best trains and stopped at the best hotels, but in them he would change to workman's attire and go out to see how he was treated. He always asked for work, never panhandled and never was suspected of any crime. Yet in eighteen cities, from New York to San Francisco, he was arrested as a vagrant and put in jail. Then he had told who he was and called in reporters to tell them how honest men, doing no wrong and suspected of none, were treated in their city.

His argument was that good men are driven to crime by such treatment, and that every city should have a municipal lodging house, with a free employment office in connection with it, in which such men could get bed, bath and breakfast in exchange for a reasonable amount of service. My story of "America's Most-Arrested Man" had not only been featured in *Everybody's Magazine* but had been reprinted by the *Literary Digest*. That article, reciting Brown's adventures in many cities, was about five thousand words. Coming on the heels of an authenticated report that I was paid two dollars a word, imagine what effect it had on our reputation!

But you can't eat reputation, except in the form of credit, and we steadfastly refused to get into debt, except with Mr. Hillman, the dairyman. And at the moment I was very nearly broke.

The reason was that I had created a character named Joshua Little, the name intended to suggest a punning

philosopher. My character might josh all kinds of current events and characters a little and if I could syndicate the feature through ten or fifteen newspapers at an average of even ten dollars a week I would have a steady income and still have time for other work.

But I was ignorant of the problems of syndication. It is practically impossible for one to syndicate himself. Nearly all the other newspapers compete for features which newspapers in the five largest cities have made popular, and it is getting so that from Coast to Coast one cannot escape the same "funnies," the same humorists and political commentators. The days when newspapers strove for individuality are very nearly over. A columnist or artist who appears in a hundred newspapers daily may influence the thinking of a multitude of persons and make a fabulous amount of money, but often the money affects his thinking more than his thinking affects his readers.

Maybe that is a sour grapes attitude, for I was notably unsuccessful. Besides writing the comments of Joshua Little, I had to have them illustrated, have matrices made of them and then write sales letters to managing editors who might possibly buy the service. For months I labored long and hard but secured only three customers. The "mats" and postage cost more than they paid and I had to give up that effort to avoid debt.

That was discouraging. But life has always been a teeter-totter for us. Up, down, up, down! With Madeleine revealing the shape of things to come, it was most distressing to run out of money. But then came a request from an editor who wished me to write a novelette.

Hardly had I started to write it when another story sold, making us solvent for another month or so. Then the novelette began to get me excited. I thought it strik-

ingly novel and also strikingly dramatic. Madeleine, too, was enthusiastic about it. This was the best thing of the kind I had ever done, and was going to bring home the biggest price. This was something to celebrate—yo, ho, ho, and a bottle of wine!

When I finished it, we were so cocksure that we went to San Diego to celebrate. Why not let joy be unconfined, for soon we would have enough money to see us through the approaching accouchement? For once in our lives we thought we had a sure thing.

The baby was due in a couple of weeks, so it was our last fling before that time. We really made a grand day of it, feeling more confident than we had felt for years.

But a week later the editor who had ordered the story got sick and the man who had taken his place sent my story back!

By that time Madeleine had practically beaten a path to the doors of the maternity ward of Mercy Hospital. We were such steady customers they did not stop us and make us pay in advance before getting past the reception hall. But next day I had to drop a note to Uncle Walt Mason. I had never cashed the check he had sent me some years before, and I hated borrowing. But I simply had to borrow money to pay the hospital bill. As for the doctor, instead of just owing him for half a baby, as I still did, I would have to owe him for a baby and a half for a while.

THE BABY WAS BORN, AND THIS one was a girl. Always before I had thought—and still believe—that the best start for any normal child is in self-respecting but necessary thriftiness. If a family has enough to pay for wholesome food, adequate clothing and decent shelter, along with all honorable obligations, that family can build more character and more strength in its young than can most of those in which sacrifice and planning and will power are not necessary. If one has a self-respecting standard to live up to, necessity is the greatest teacher in the world.

However, a girl baby made me look at things differently. Boys had to take a lot of hard knocks, but girls should be protected. Besides, I had borrowed from Walt Mason to pay the hospital and owed the doctor. I had no right to let those obligations go while I pursued a literary career which wasn't going anywhere.

Pondering that, a memory came which made me smile ruefully. Nine years before my sister Virginia had shown a clipping of my account of the war's end at Verdun to Harry Chandler of the *Los Angeles Times*. Chandler had read it and remarked: "The man who wrote that could

join *The Times* Family any time he wished." Virginia had written me to that effect while I still was in Paris, but at that time I had other aspirations. Chandler had never seen nor heard of me before, and doubtless his casual remark meant nothing. He was a kindhearted man to whom a newcomer in California had shown a clipping of her brother's work, and he had said something courteous. Two years later, however, when we were in Mexico City, Madeleine and I had seen in a Mexican paper that Harry Chandler was there, and had called on him. We had spent only about fifteen minutes with him, but had liked him and he had seemed to like us.

Of course it was silly to imagine anyone would be bound by a casual remark he had made nine years before about a man he had never seen. But with five children, one a girl, to rear and educate, the fluctuating income of a freelance writer threatened risks which might prove disastrous.

"I'm going to Los Angeles to ask Harry Chandler for a job," I announced.

"You're not giving up writing?" asked Madeleine.

"I'm giving up hack writing. For six years I've had to grind out plot-and-action stories to live on. I came here to write for posterity but sometimes fear I'm writing for posteriors."

I have met hundreds of famous persons in my time, but very few great persons. Harry Chandler was one of the great. He stood six feet one, was easy of manner, kindly, humorous, gentle and friendly. His religion was devotion to integrity, loyalty, courage and beneficial progress.

When I reached the outer office in which his secretary intercepted visitors, half a dozen persons were waiting. One was pompous and almost insulted because he had to

wait in such a motley crowd, another looked like a crackpot and another like a beggar. Anyone who cared to wait could see Chandler and once, much later, he told me that many of his best ideas had come from his humblest callers. He felt it his obligation to improve the world he lived in and seemed to feel that whenever he helped someone do anything worth doing he helped everyone.

I waited and took my turn. When I entered the private office he shook hands with me and invited me to sit.

"Nine years ago," I said, "You made a rash remark. You said I might join *The Times* Family any time I wished."

"I have some vague recollection of that," he chuckled, "though it was quite a while ago."

"Well, sir, I'm broke and need a job. I don't ask what the job is nor what the pay is. I know you'll be fair."

Chandler smiled. "All right," he said. "I'll talk to Mr. Trueblood, the managing editor. We'll give you something."

I was prepared to take any job at any pay. But when I reported to Trueblood three days later he said:

"Mr. Chandler told me you were coming. You were a columnist and feature writer on the *Kansas City Star,* I remember. We want you to write a human interest column about persons and things in California."

Thus I fell into the pleasantest of jobs. No one told me what to write nor how to write it. I had no office hours and could travel about for days or even weeks, just so my columns reached the editor in time. I reasoned that the things and persons which interested me most would interest the average reader, so every day I sought out the persons, places or activities which interested me at the

moment and wrote about them. And I was reasonably well paid for doing it.

I felt a great sense of obligation to Chandler for giving me such an opportunity, and tried hard to justify it. That kindly, quiet, far-seeing man did so much of great importance to the development of the entire Southwest, besides frequently inaugurating movements of national and international importance, that I feel the public should know more of him than his modesty and habitual shunning of the limelight ever permitted it to know. As a builder of the West, and of one of the most successful newspapers in the world, he influenced the lives of millions of persons, and his own story is inspiring. I believe there would be very little labor-management strife in this country if all employers followed his code, which he summed up to me in these words:

"It is as much my duty to be loyal to you as it is your duty to be loyal to me."

As a youth, Chandler had quit Dartmouth College and had gone to Los Angeles because he was threatened with tuberculosis. He was almost penniless in a cheap boarding house there when his landlady asked him to leave because of his cough. The dirty but growing town of Los Angeles was then becoming sensitive about "lungers."

That did not embitter the friendless semi-invalid of eighteen. Nothing ever embittered Chandler. He agreed that rural life, where he could sleep outdoors in good weather, would be better for him. In the San Fernando Valley he found a squatter who had no money but was glad to let him work on shares. Chandler felt the man's farming methods could be greatly improved and a rapidly growing town in a semi-desert area would offer a good market for all that could be produced.

In two years he was apparently well and had saved two thousand dollars. He had never hurried, never overexerted himself, but had planned things so carefully that he got a great deal done every day and yet had his rest periods. He returned to Dartmouth, for he yearned for a degree. But the New England winter brought back his cough, and he had to give up that aspiration.

He returned to California and soon recovered his health and accumulated some money. The *Los Angeles Times* then was a young and struggling newspaper. Its staff was so small the accounts of carriers and newsboys often got tangled. Chandler proposed that he take all that worry on himself. He would buy the entire printing as it came off the press each day and attend to distributing it and collecting for it. The circulation manager, who had a couple of other jobs to attend to, agreed to that.

The plan worked so well that Chandler made a similar proposition to a rival paper, so that if a subscriber got angry at one he could sell him the other.

Seeing other chances for improvement, Chandler went to Colonel—later General—Harrison Gray Otis, owner of the *Times*, to suggest that he be given entire charge of circulation. The Colonel, famous for his fiery outbursts, sputtered like a warning fuse. No outsider could have control of any part of his paper!

"But, Colonel," said Chandler with a friendly smile, "I have it already."

Confronted with proof, Otis made him circulation manager.

Chandler was no desk manager. He stripped to his undershirt to labor in the circulation department. If a carrier got sick, Chandler delivered the paper, if necessary. When a flood came, stopping the distribution of

other newspapers, Chandler delivered the *Times* by rowboat.

He also bought outlying land and subdivided it. He bought *Times* stock whenever he heard of any for sale. He bought land in Imperial Valley, which was producing nothing but cactus, mesquite and rattlesnakes, and helped inaugurate irrigation projects which have made that area the world's richest agricultural area of six hundred thousand acres. Always seeing chances for improvement, he later developed large areas in Mexico.

In one year Chandler's lands in Mexico were said to have produced six million dollars worth of cotton. But when I asked him about that he langhed:

"Oh, that all belonged to my tenants."

He took great interest in Mexico and, because I had lived there, liked to talk with me about it. One night he asked:

"Did I ever tell you how I secured recognition for Mexico?"

"How *you* secured it?" I exclaimed. My mind flashed back to one night when I was sitting in a cafe in Tampico. We were sipping *chocolate Espanola,* which, accompanied by little cakes, cost only a quarter. Suddenly an excited waiter plopped two bottles of fine champagne on our table and began to pull the cork of one. Those were thrifty days for us, and I did not have nearly enough money in my pocket to pay for champagne. I protested that we had not ordered it, but the waiter grandly informed us it was served with the compliments of the *casa.*

"The United States has recognized Mexico!" he exulted. "It is the great achievement of President Obregon!"

Then we saw that the proprietor and all his staff were placing champagne before everyone in the cafe, and the

patrons were leaping to their feet to cheer and toast the event. In the street outside, roman candles and rockets began to light the sky and fire-crackers and pistols popped. It was like an old-fashioned Fourth of July at home, except that music played a large part in it. A band came parading down the street, and every Mexican who could strum a guitar or toot a horn, it seemed, swarmed out into the streets to play, and impromptu dances started in a hundred places.

Chandler chuckled and told the story. The Southern Pacific had started to build a railroad from Mazatlan to Guadalajara, to connect with the Mexican National Railways there and permit through service from the United States to Mexico City. But after spending some seventeen million dollars it had got into disagreement with the Mexican government. Both sides got their hackles up and refused to give an inch. Then Obregon had asked Chandler to mediate.

It was senseless for both sides to stand on their dignity. Mexico had needed a traffic highway across the Gran Barranca, as the Continental Divide is called down there, ever since the days of Cortez. One of his armies had tried to establish a trail, but had given up after being trapped in a place they named Sal-si-puede, or Get Out if You Can. Many of Mexico's revolutions and bandit scourges had started west of the Gran Barranca and soldiers sent to quell them had had to go by such circuitous routes that they could never contact the enemy while in force but ran into innumerable ambushes when they scattered out. On the other hand, the Southern Pacific had spent millions in an effort which would be sheer loss unless the line to Guadalajara could be completed. Both the railroad and the Mexican nation would benefit tremendously

from a railroad through the Barranca but, like some other international negotiators, each side denounced the presentations of the other and felt national honor or personal dignity demanded surrender from the other.

Chandler approached both camps as a friend, concerned only with what all concerned would lose if the road was not completed and what they would gain if it were. He let each side sputter out its indignation without raising any opposing argument, and finally outlined an agreement which both were glad to sign. Then they adjourned to Guadalajara to drive a golden spike to start the road.

Obregon asked Chandler to make the trip from Mexico City to Guadalajara as his guest in his private car. During the trip, Obregon said:

"Amigo, I've done something important for you. Now I want you to do something for me. I must secure recognition for Mexico or my administration will be a failure. But here is a six-page letter from your President Harding, with whom I took up the matter personally, saying it is impossible."

"That's a big assignment, in the face of such a letter from Harding," smiled Chandler. Obregon pounded with clenched fist.

"I've hired what you call lobbyists who have got twenty-two of your state Legislatures to pass resolutions urging recognition!" he exclaimed. "But nothing has been done about it."

Chandler perked his ears at that and got full information. After returning to Los Angeles, he got the *Kansas City Star* to publish a short editorial, telling that twenty-two American states had adopted such resolutions and

naming them. With a clipping of that editorial in his pocket, he went to Washington.

Hoover then was Secretary of Commerce. Chandler called on Hoover.

"I encouraged him to talk about his own ambitions until about midnight," chuckled Chandler. "Then, as I was leaving, I pulled that editorial out of my vest pocket and said:

"Mr. Secretary, here's something I clipped out of the *Kansas City Star* on my way east. I think it is fraught with great danger for the Republican Party."

"Hoover read the editorial and laughed:

"They're mostly Democratic states. I don't see the great danger to the Republican Party."

"'I think I do. In the next campaign, the Democrats will charge that the Harding administration was a do-nothing administration. If they can show that twenty-two sovereign states asked for certain action and nothing was done about it, they will have a talking point. On the other hand, if Harding would appoint a commission to go to Mexico City—not ask Mexico to meet us half-way but make the courteous advance on our side—he would be in the position of having made a sincere effort. And if that commission reported that recognition was impossible he would still be in that position.'"

Hoover pondered that a moment, and said:

"I believe you're right. I'll speak to the President about it tomorrow."

Two days later Chandler got a note from Harding, asking him to call at the White House. When he called, Harding asked him to head the commission he had suggested. But Chandler, who always dodged the limelight, said that because of his own big interests in Mexico

some persons might misinterpret his motives, and suggested that Harding consult with John Hays Hammond, who knew a great deal about Mexico. Harding agreed.

Two hours later Chandler was on a train for New York, to inform Hammond of what was about to happen. The next day Hammond received a note from Harding, asking him to call.

Hammond named the two men whom Harding appointed as commissioners. They went to Mexico City as friendly emissaries, observing all the courtesies. That approach completely won the Mexican negotiators, and the agreement still in force was signed.

I suspect that many of Chandler's closest associates never heard of his part in that international diplomacy, for he told me about it only because of our mutual interest in Mexico. But later I asked John Hays Hammond about it and he assured me it had been brought about just as Chandler had said it was. Often since then I have wished we had a Harry Chandler as our negotiator in international disputes. He had the gift which enabled him to stick to his principles without arousing opposition.

Chandler always thought things through first, then prepared so thoroughly he could not be stopped. One day he called Burton Smith, his state editor, and Randolph Leigh, an editorial writer, into his office and smilingly told them they were fired.

"Go to the other end of the business district," he said, "and rent offices in the Chamber of Commerce Building, in the name of the Southern California Citizens Committee. Then get out and organize a branch of the Citizens Committee in every county, made up of men of highest character. The high school and college youth of today will be leaders of tomorrow. I want to get all of them

studying the advantages of our form of government over any other form of government, the guarantees in our Constitution and the reasons why they were put there. We'll make the prizes big enough to arouse interest—a fifteen hundred dollar grand prize in each division and suitable prizes for the winners in each good-sized city and every county. We'll rent the biggest halls in each community for the oratorical competitions, and I want rooting squads organized in every school, just as they are for football. I want you to work up enthusiasm for democratic processes and for true Americanism. But don't let anyone know that I have anything to do with it, nor that the *Times* has."

Smith and Leigh did their job so well that eight thousand students competed that first year and theaters and big halls were packed with cheering crowds of fellow students and friends. The winners in every county not only got handsome prizes but were transported to the big cities and the state capitol and finally to Washington to deliver their orations before the President and the judges of the Supreme Court. In all, hundreds of thousands of persons heard impressive orations on the advantages of ordered government, of, by and for the people. And no one knew that Chandler had paid for all of it.

Chandler was so pleased that he sent Smith and Leigh to Washington to put on such contests in every state, underwriting the effort for one hundred thousand dollars. In nearly every big city, however, a leading newspaper sponsored the contests in its own area, and half a million of this country's brightest young people studied the American Constitution enough to write essays about it, in many schools the essay contests being preliminary to oratorical contests. After state contests there were re-

gional contests, after which the winners toured America, appearing in principal cities of each region and winding up again with finals before the President, and the Supreme Court.

The contests educated thousands, in every city in which they were held. Chandler felt results were so good that he sent Leigh to Paris to set up international contests. If he could get the brightest young persons in every major country to study the advantages of constitutional government and democratic processes, he believed, the effect on the future of the world might be tremendous, and if those same young persons traveled together from London to Paris to Berlin to Rome—to every capital which greatly influenced the world—and wound up in Washington, the results would be international understanding and friendship.

England, France, Argentina, Brazil, Japan and other nations were all ready to launch such contests when the rise of Mussolini and Hitler made them impossible. I often wonder what might have happened if Chandler's benign plan had been allowed to operate for a few years in Germany and Italy. With those nations suddenly antagonistic, and other nations growing suspicious of them, it had to be abandoned.

It never became generally known, even in Los Angeles, that Chandler's brain and money were behind that effort, which for a time gave promise of becoming a worldwide movement. When a leading magazine asked me to write an article about Chandler and his works, he would not let me do it.

"A dozen great American publishers have adapted our plan to meet situations in their own areas," he said, "and I wish them to feel it is as much their plan as mine."

Chandler was an officer or director of thirty-five corporations, most of which had to do with the development of the West. He started a steamship line to Hawaii just to give tourists in Los Angeles opportunity for a pleasant side trip. He was a trustee of Stanford University, a trustee of the California Institute of Technology, the principal owner of the Tejon Ranch of close to three hundred acres, stocked with cattle, and also the principal owner of eight hundred and sixty thousand acres of productive land in Mexico. Yet any washerwoman or humble citizen could get into Chandler's private office for an interview if willing to wait until his editors and others he had to see had had their turn.

Despite his modesty and avoidance of the limelight, a constant stream of callers sought his advice and help. A man with more than two thousand employees could not know them all, but he knew the personal problems of a surprising number of them, and many a night he sat up late to try to help some of the humblest of them solve those problems. Until he was well past seventy, he rarely left his office before midnight, and usually it was much later. Frequently Herbert Hoover and other national figures telephoned to ask his advice, just as his own employees did, and even if it was long past midnight he would not walk out on anyone who was waiting to see him, unless it was necessary.

Bill Henry, one of Chandler's most alert reporters, got the idea that airplanes were going to amount to something, and Chandler encouraged him to take a year's leave of absence and go to Cleveland to work with Glenn Martin. The first aviation meet in America had been held at Dominguez Field near Los Angeles, the first air mail had been carried between Catalina Island and Los

Angeles. In Cleveland Henry met a young engineer who seemed to have revoluntionary but sound ideas. Henry talked the engineer into locating in Los Angeles, where one citizen was willing to pay him for building one plane. He hoped the new principle demonstrated in that plane would bring him financial backing for others, and it did interest the Navy so it was willing to buy two planes, as experiments. That first plane was built in a carpenter shop, a garage and an old barn, as the engineer had no plant.

Then Henry introduced the engineer to Chandler, who took no personal interest in planes but was interested in anything which might give Southern California a new industry. Chandler and a few friends raised the money the engineer needed, without making him turn over control, as the brilliant Loughead (Lockheed) brothers had to do when they needed financing. Actually, the money advanced was more like a loan, which could be paid off if the product succeeded and forgotten if it failed.

But it did not fail. That young engineer was Donald Douglas. And that Bill Henry was the one now nationally known as a newspaper and radio commentator.

That was the sort of great man Chandler was. Hardly anyone knew how he worked behind the scenes for all the major efforts which changed Los Angeles from a dirty half-Mexican town to a great American city, just as hardly anyone knew how he had secured recognition for Mexico after a President of the United States had said it was impossible. Few of even his daily associates knew how great a man Chandler was. But I felt mighty lucky to be working for him.

CHICAGO, NEW YORK, LONDON, Paris and Mexico City had all fascinated me, but I thought Los Angeles, though a hodge-podge, offered more diversity and contrast than any of them. Its roaring present did not eclipse its past but only veiled it as a luminous mist might veil the light of the moon. It was a manmade city, where nature had never intended a city to be. It had had to achieve the impossible to get water, to get a harbor, to reap riches from desert. It had struck oil when many of its residents still used whale oil lamps. The thinly populated West Coast could not use one-tenth the oil Los Angeles could refine, so the city brought pressure on railroads and ships to burn oil instead of coal, thus revolutionizing transportation all over the world. That was typical of the way Los Angeles did things, and the spirit which became a virus in the blood of its residents.

"It has become the city of golden dreams to the youth of the whole world," a man who had served Cooks Tours on four continents told me. "Hollywood has reached out to every civilized land and many that are not civilized for their favorite sons and daughters, their actors, dancers,

musicians, directors and designers, and has made them rich and famous. In all their homelands, gifted young people read about such persons and wish to come here, too."

Every day I saw proof of that statement. With the backing of a great newspaper, I could meet almost anyone I wished to study. The great Maeterlinck was there. Playwrights who had to write in French, German, Hungarian, Italian or some other tongue, and have it translated, were there. All were famous for something, though some for very tawdry work. Authors like Hugh Walpole, G. K. Chesterton and Sir Gilbert Parker shared publicity blurbs with authors of the latest sexy sensation. When they arrived by train they were met in the station by reception committees, greeted by beautiful actresses, asked to pose for innumerable photographs. Sometimes there were even bands or orchestras. I recall one Russian baron who wrote in French, who was received with more acclaim than now is accorded to any of the half dozen royal visitors to Los Angeles in recent years. Today he is so forgotten that he cannot even get into any Hollywood studio. His name means nothing to any story editor now.

Yet Hollywood was Wonderland in which anything might happen. Ayn Rand, for example, worked her way through the University of Petrograd, before it became sovietized, by translating and condensing stage and screen items from American newspapers. She got to Hollywood as soon as she could, but no studio gatekeeper could read Russian and Ayn looked a bit shabby and dowdy. She could not get into any studio to apply for a job. But she kept appearing at the outer gates. In case lightning should strike, she would be there.

Instead of lightning there was rain, while she was hopelessly standing outside the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio. She could not stay there and get soaked. She hurried for the street car, blocks away.

The shower was turning into a downpour when a passing car stopped. The man in it asked if he could give her a lift to the car line. Her accent, when she thanked him, aroused curiosity, and he asked questions.

When they reached the car line, he said:

"I'm driving past Hollywood and Vine. Will it help if I let you out there instead of here?"

Indeed it would. It would save her much time and ten cents car fare. As they drove on, the man kept asking questions. As they neared Hollywood and Vine he asked:

"Can you sew?"

"Yes."

He stopped the car and scribbled on a card. "Take this to the wardrobe department at M-G-M," he said. "Maybe they'll give you a job as a seamstress."

He drove on and she looked at the card. The name on it was Cecil B. DeMille.

She got a job as a seamstress but spent her spare time writing plays. She had little else to do evenings. She showed a play to DeMille and he told her what was wrong with it. She wrote another which had such an original twist that someone decided to risk a few dollars on producing it, in a theater which had been dark some time and could be rented cheap.

That was when I met Miss Rand and gave her her first publicity. The play succeeded so well it was taken to New York, and succeeded there. The future author of "The Fountainhead" was on her way.

Despite her fortitude and abiliity, she might never have got a chance had not DeMille and a rainstorm come along at the same moment. For that matter, there might never have been a Hollywood but for DeMille. He was the man who proved real plays could be presented on the screen. Half a barn was all he and Jesse Lasky and Sam Goldwyn could rent at first. When carriages were being washed on the other side, they had to put their feet on their desk and let the waters flow under them. There DeMille translated "The Squaw Man" into a shooting script which showed the entire nation that the despised "nickel shows" had a future. DeMille was a stubborn and wilful autocrat, who could be devastatingly critical of persons who were far more artistic than he was in their lines. But his achievements were great and his kindnesses to persons beneath the notice of lesser personages were many.

Will Rogers was making "Thay Had to See Paris," and had a high regard for Homer Croy. As I had been Croy's roommate while he was gathering material for the novel from which the screen story was made, it was easy for me to get to visit Rogers, and we soon became friends.

Baseless rumors never die, no matter how often disproved. A famous columnist, misled as famous columnists so often are, once printed a report that Will was well educated, had even attended Oxford University, and was purposely ungrammatical to be in character as a cowboy. After we became friendly, I said:

"Will, you are America's most popular writer at the moment. Every day millions of newspaper readers look for what you write, and your name on the cover of one of the nation's most popular magazines means extra cir-

culation. Why is it that sometimes you disregard the laws of syntax?"

"What's syntax?" demanded Will, with alert interest. "Sounds like more bad news for Hollywood. If I'm a sintax dodger I didn't know it."

"What I mean is that sometimes you use bad grammar, but some people say you do it purposely, thinking it goes with your philosophy.

Will looked abashed. His shy eyes turned away and sought the far horizon. I was afraid I had hurt him. But then he murmured:

"I didn't know grammar was what they was buyin' now."

He spoke so drolly and quietly, as if to himself, that I could only throw back my head and laugh at myself. Will had the rare gift of suggesting much more than he said. He was neither defending nor attacking, merely thinking aloud, yet I was reminded that Presidents had sent urgent invitations to this simple man and would rather have his approval than that of any other one private citizen, and the great of Europe also had welcomed him when he traveled abroad as a goodwill ambassador. They recognized him as one whose shrewd common sense appealed to all America. But there was nothing pretentious about Will. He continued simply:

"Nope. I write just as I think, and any resemblance to grammar is accidental. I was raised in Indian Territory, and have some Cherokee blood from both my parents. That's how I got my land in Oklahoma. I was sent to school in Missouri, but never got past the fifth grade. I was always more interested in learnin' to rope an' ride than in learnin' from books."

For all that, I remember Will and Marie Dressler as two of the most broadly educated persons I ever knew, for both read the newspapers thoroughly and were amazingly informed on everything which got in the news. Miss Dressler told me she never attended school after she was fourteen, but her mother had commanded her to read the newspapers wherever she was and she had made such reading an imperative habit. She, too, was an honored guest at the White House and was one whose ideas carried weight in any company.

Will could talk with scientists, sportsmen, politicians, financiers, explorers or almost anyone as one who knew what they had done, if they had done anything outstanding, yet was always his simple, unassuming self. Instead of trying to think up his own next remark, he listened keenly to what anyone he was with was saying, and his reply was a direct response to it.

In his youth, he told me, he and a friend sold some cattle and thought they had money enough to go to Argentina—Boonas Airs, Will called it. They went to Noo Awlins, he said, but no ships for Boonas Airs were there. They went to New York and finally to England to get direct passage. That was one reason why Will believed in airplanes.

Life as gauchos disappointed them, and Will's omnivorous reading decided them to go to South Africa.

"The Boer War was on," Will said, "and the English was buyin' horses in Montana and Wyoming. Maybe some of the boys out there was pro-Boer. Anyway, they was sellin' the English so many wild horses that the horses was killin' more British Tommies than the Boers was. We read that men who could break horses was bein' paid

fancy pay. We'd traveled first class to Boonas Airs, but we'd got so low we traveled to Capetown steerage.

"We'd hardly got there when the war ended. There we was, broke in a strange land far from home. There was also a quarter-million Englishmen who wanted to go home right now. They needed entertainment bad, so we got up a Wild West show for 'em. That's what started me in show business."

They made enough to pay their way home, but Will liked show business. Soon he joined a Wild West show. When it broke up in New York he got roof garden jobs as a rope-trick entertainer. To explain the tricks, he began a line of patter, which made a bigger hit than the tricks. Persons who had seen and heard him came back to other performances, bringing friends, so Will had to change his patter every night. That compelled him to make comments on current events. Soon those comments, syndicated from Coast to Coast, were amusing more Americans than had ever before delighted in the daily drolleries of any one human being.

Will loved his horses and they loved him. Before a polo game he would pet and whisper to them and they would nuzzle him and whinny in reply. During the prohibition era his favorite polo pony was named Bootlegger. As he came off the field one day I stopped him to introduce some friends.

"Why do you call that beautiful horse Bootlegger, Mr. Rogers?" a woman asked.

Will was chewing a straw. He had starred in the game but he seemed shy and embarrassed, almost apologetic.

"Well, Ma'am," he said defensively, "he's pretty tricky . . . But I guess I'll have to change his name. Today my groom started to bring out another horse for the last

chukker, and I hollered: 'I want Bootlegger.' And do you know, Ma'am, twenty-three of 'em popped up out of the grandstand and came sidlin' forward?"

That, too, was a comment on current affairs, for Hollywood then was so full of bootleggers some could be found even in church.

No other novelist enjoyed the repeated outstanding success that Lloyd C. Douglas did between 1930 and 1950, but few of the millions who read his books had any idea that he was a humorist of exceptional deftness, and was especially delightful as a teller of droll stories. His story of his own career, as he told it to me indicates the humorous way in which he looked at even himself.

"I was pastor of a church in Los Angeles," he said, "when there was division in the congregation. I couldn't quite believe a whale swallowed Jonah, and some thought that if I doubted that I doubted everything. I did not wish to offend anyone, but did not wish to be a hypocrite, either, so I went to Catalina Island to ponder the situation. There I decided to resign and try to preach to a multitude of people, through a book, instead of to a few hundred in a church."

He had never had anything published except some ethical essays. He wrote *Magnificent Obsession* and sent it to the publisher of those essays. "It came back," he chuckled, "with a letter saying if I would cut out the romance and stick to ethics they would reconsider. Instead, I sent it to another publisher. That one returned it too, with a note saying if I would cut out the ethics and stick to romance he would reconsider."

Douglas knew a publisher of tracts, Sunday school papers and such religious literature. He asked his advice and that man, who had never published a novel, pub-

lished an edition of twenty-five hundred copies. Very few sold, but the publisher was alert. In a religious journal published in Kansas City he read an editorial denouncing the demoralizing trends in some modern novels. Immediately the publisher wrote the editor of that journal, commending his editorial but suggesting that it might help more to call attention to the books right-thinking persons should read than to denounce and thereby advertise those they should not read. The publisher thought Lloyd C. Douglas's new novel, *Magnificent Obession,* was just that kind of book, and was taking the liberty of sending the magazine editor a copy.

The magazine editor agreed that *Magnificent Obsession* was just the sort of wholesome reading he could recommend, and did so in print. Thus the book which had very nearly died aborning began to sell. It outgrew the capacity of the comparatively small printing plant which had issued it and became such a success that each succeeding book by Douglas was also a best-seller.

In the midst of World War II the one millionth copy of the trade edition of *The Robe* came off the press, besides which there had been a huge armed-forces edition. Ira R. Kent, editor-in-chief of the publishing company, came to Los Angeles personally to present that millionth copy to Douglas. He found the author in the Good Samaritan Hospital, so crippled by arthritis that he could not raise his head from the pillow without help. At the same time, Mrs. Douglas was dying in their beautiful home in Bel-Air. Though only a few miles apart, they could not even comfort one another by telephone. What Kent had hoped would be a presentation such as no other author he knew had ever been thrilled by was an

event which made him blink to keep back his own sympathetic tears.

After Mrs. Douglas died, Douglas was moved to the home of his daughter in Nevada. I did not see him for six months or more. Then I met him in a Los Angeles bookstore, still so crippled he had to shuffle. He warned me to shake hands gently.

"But you're lots better," I declared.

He smiled ruefully but did not wish to recite his aches and pains. Instead, he glanced about and said:

"All these books remind me of a story. A peddler saw an old lady knitting and squinting as if it was difficult for her to see what she was doing. 'Grandma,' he said, 'can I interest you in some coarse yarns?' Still squinting, the old woman drawled: 'Why, yes, young man. Tell me some. I can't read the new novels any more.'"

Later Douglas came to the Authors Club and gave us a dissertation on arthritis which kept all of us laughing, though he had to sit because he could not stand for more than a few minutes.

A few days before Douglas died I visited him. Every twenty minutes or so he slipped an apparatus over his head and worked a sort of pump, which, I believe, gave him oxygen. Two nurses were keeping continual watch on him, but every day, they told me, he dictated to his secretary for most of an hour.

"The main trouble with my books," he said smiling, "is that I don't write them very well. But there are things I want to say, so I must say them."

He did not wish me to carry away a gloomy impression. As I said goodby he held my hand and said:

"Wait a minute. I want to tell you a story."

He told me one of the funniest stories I ever heard, and I went away laughing. Two days later he died.

Of all the writers I met, I owe most to Hamlin Garland. He had just won the Pulitzer Prize when I met him, and he told me he had rewritten the book which won it ten times.

All my life I had been hurried by deadlines or economic pressures. I could not imagine a life in which one had time to rewrite ten times. But most of us would have twice as much time if we systematized our efforts. Garland told me he got up at half past five, brewed a pot of coffee and made toast on an electric gadget in his study and was at work by six. At nine o'clock he was through with work for the day. Then he breakfasted, read the morning paper and attended to his personal mail. That occupied him until luncheon. After luncheon he and Mrs. Garland would take a long drive, with some destination in mind. Sometimes they would drop in on Will Rogers, Will Durant, Robert Benchley or even on me, for their range of friends was very wide. Such drives and visits would fill the afternoon, and they would be home in plenty of time to rest before dinner. After dinner they would go to a show if an exceptionally good one were in town, otherwise one of their two daughters would read aloud. Thus Mr. Garland had time for his work, his personal correspondence and his friends, and kept up with both the world of books and the world of men—and he was the only distinguished person I knew who had time for all those things.

Once I realized that, an important fact began to dawn on me. After awakened pondering, I announced to Madeleine:

"If that dear old gentleman can get up at half past five I should be able to get up at six. I'm going to set the alarm clock tonight. I'll get up at six, take a walk to compose my mind and get to work in my den by seven. I'll write from seven until eight. You'll call me to breakfast at eight, and that will end literature for the day. We'll have breakfast and the morning paper and I'll go to work for *The Times* at nine. We have a steady salary, so I won't be under financial pressure. We won't have to sell whatever I write in order to live, so I won't have to slant anything nor write a line I do not feel is absolutely honest. I've put off starting for years, but that is going to be our program for the year beginning tomorrow at six."

HOLLYWOOD MAY BE ENTERING a new era of greater and better things, but it seems to have reached the end of the one in which it symbolized the glory that was greasepaint and the grandeur that was Romanoff's. No matter what happens next, however, that era will long be legendary to all of us who watched it, goggle-eyed.

In the latter twenties, it was a dull week when, as a reporter, I didn't interview some personality whose salary was said to be from $20,000 to $30,000 a week, all of whom were sure they were helping create the world's most dazzling center of the arts. "Hollywood," they argued, "has drawn together some 30,000 artistic persons and welded them into the highest-paid, least hidebound and freest-spending community its size in the world. That not only makes actors, directors, stage designers, costume designers and beauticians flock to Hollywood but makes it an exceptional field for daring architects, artists, musicians, furniture designers and all kinds of artistic seekers of the patronage of those with money to spare."

When radio became important it only strengthened Hollywood's position. Thousands of actors, plus writers and musicians from all over the world, had become landed gentry within easy reach of Hollywood and loved it. After years of living out of trunks it seemed heavenly. Those under contract to motion picture studios could not go away except for short visits but those best suited to radio could earn fabulous salaries in movie studios by day and make recordings for radio in their spare time. What had seemed Heaven before became all this and radio too.

Then came television, putting still more icing on the cake at first but gradually putting thousands of small city theaters on ice. There still is a great market for outstandingly good pictures, but the market for all others ain't what it used to be. Many of Hollywood's favorites now look to television as their chief source of income, and many others who wouldn't consider offers for stage shows in New York, because of their movie contracts, are eager to get them now.

Though never more than an amazed spectator of the Hollywood scene in that period of greatest glamour, I want to set down a few personal incidents which seem to me revelatory of it. For one, I can never forget a luncheon interview with Norma Shearer when she was at her height. It was in her dressing room, which really was a suite of several rooms with a cook and a personal maid in attendance. I found Miss Shearer to be both witty and charming and the interview lasted an hour and a half. I had been there about an hour when there was a knock on the door and when Miss Shearer called "Come in" her personal business manager entered. We were introduced and he chatted a few minutes, then arose to go.

"I dropped in to give you some information you requested," he told her. "I'll drop in again when you're through shooting today."

Miss Shearer excused herself and walked to the door with him. At the door she lowered her voice and asked:

"Just what is my checking account balance?"

It was a small room and I couldn't help hearing. The man looked over her head at me, saw I seemed not to be hearing, and whispered:

"Eighty."

Miss Shearer looked surprised. "Only eighty dollars?" she asked, mildly perturbed. He smiled.

"Eighty thousand," he replied.

Another incident revelatory of the casualness with which many of Hollywood's notables reveled in their fantastic prosperity occurred when Al Jolson was at his zenith and was said to be drawing $25,000 a week. I was sitting with him on a lawn one bright afternoon when a newsboy came down street hawking papers. Jolson was relating and I was listening. I didn't even notice the boy but Jolson stopped abruptly, whistled loudly and then, as the boy turned, vigorously beckoned him. When the boy ran to us Jolson almost snatched a paper, handed the boy a quarter and waved him away. He opened the paper and stared at it for half a minute, then dropped it on the turf beside him.

"Excuse me," he said. "I had to see how the stock market was going."

I laughed. "It's none of my business," I said, "but you are making more money than you can possibly spend. Why on earth do you play the market?"

Jolson stared at me a long moment. Then he laid a hand on my knee and leaned forward earnestly.

"Listen," he said, "I can remember when I used to walk down the street to a clothing store and stand there, looking in the window at a suit I wanted. 'Not this week,' I used to tell myself. 'Not next week, nor the week after. But four weeks from now, if you save your money, Jolson, you can buy that $20.00 suit.' And when I bought it I got a thrill . . . Now I can't get a thrill out of anything but the stock market!"

That seemed to me the most disillusioned thing I had ever heard anyone say and I felt sorry for Jolson. I was getting thrills almost daily, from being able to get intimate glimpses of world famous persons. My salary then was one-250th of what Jolson's was.

It was a thrill to me, for example, to meet Maeterlinck. He had been lured to Hollywood by an offer of more money than he had ever seen, and then Hollywood hadn't been able to fit him in anywhere. Being a philosopher, he did not let that distress him and proceeded to enjoy himself as much as possible. In the studio he met Kid McCoy, a former champion pugilist, and immediately expressed a desire to box with the Kid. I was there when they put on the gloves, and I was amazed at Maeterlinck's good boxing. Every time Maeterlinck landed a blow his eyes lit up as triumphantly as they must have every time he thought of a deathless line for "The Blue Bird."

That incident did more to impress me with the value of philosophy than did any other one thing I can recall. Maeterlinck simply shrugged off the fact that Hollywood was not for him without either remorse or bitterness. I couldn't help comparing him with W. J. Locke, whose novels then were so popular in Europe and America that he could live in England in good weather, flit to the Riviera when it was bad, and be happy, prosperous and

honored in both places. But in Hollywood he was a lost soul, bewildered by creative methods he could not understand. I visited him frequently and he seemed the lonesomest man I knew. Day after day he would sit by a window in a luxury hotel suite, staring into space and trying to think of ways in which he could fit in. Because he couldn't he felt humiliated and crushed by a sense of failure. After some months he returned to the Riviera and died there shortly afterward.

It was much the same with Eugene Walter, who arrived confident that he was a gifted playwright who could improve the films. When he gave up he told me he felt humiliated and frustrated by his inability to grasp Hollywood ideas. "It's another language," he moaned, "and for me they don't hire translators." At that time there were several foreign playwrights in Hollywood who wrote in their own languages, for whom the studios employed skilled translators. I knew two, one Russian, one Hungarian, who were welcomed like visiting royalty when they arrived, but couldn't get by a studio gateman a few years later.

When the studios reached out for talent the sky was the limit. Probably everyone has heard how Sam Goldwyn tried to induce G. B. Shaw, after which Shaw said: "Mr. Goldwyn talked only of art while I talked only of money," but I suspect he was reversing the facts. Money counted so little that when Barrie, Anthony Hope and others could not be induced to come to Hollywood Lasky-Famous Players sent Mary O'Connor, then its story editor, to spend months in London mapping out a production of "Peter Pan" which would please Barrie. The routine was for Barrie and Miss O'Connor to have tea together almost daily to discuss what she had written that day.

In 1958, an act of Congress made Michael Romanoff an American citizen. When Romanoff faced deportation from America years ago he vowed that he was born in Brooklyn and his name was Harry Gerguson, but he could not prove he was born in this country, so he made the best of it. If the United States insisted he was a foreigner he would at least be an interesting foreigner. When he returned to this country he casually dropped intimations that he was a Russian nobleman—and had the manner to bear out the suggestion. He never actually claimed to be a member of the Russian imperial family but just as studiously he avoided disclaiming it. When I directly questioned him he smiled and said, "That is what some people say. But this is America, where we have no titles."

No one could have waved away a princedom more nonchalantly. But over the entrance to his restaurant is what looks like the imperial coat of arms of Russia with a bar sinister across it. And every day tourists stare at Mike and whisper: "If it weren't for the Communists he would be Czar of Russia now. And wouldn't you know he was royal by just looking at him?"

It seems to me that Romanoff's was, and is, symbolic of Hollywood, the land of Make Believe, where more fairy stories have come true than are written in books. In the twenties, half the waitresses in Hollywood were girls who had won beauty contests back home and had flocked to Hollywood with high hopes. Hadn't Mary Pickford done it? Hadn't a little girl born to the New York water front become known all over the world as the It Girl? Hadn't Lawrence Tibbett been glad to sing in a chorus for $75 a month before Rupert Hughes heard him and helped the young stranger to go to New York to prepare

for grand opera? And now—which was far more important to Hollywood—Tibbett was starring in "The Rogue Song." Weren't more than half the big shots of Hollywood men or women with rags to riches stories? Who cared if Romanoff was a prince or not, if he was good enough actor to live the part? Real princes were no novelty to Hollywood. Half a dozen of its stars had married them, and it honored good actors far more.

All the great of Hollywood used to frequent the Writers Club, which once a month put on original plays, many written by famous members and acted by other famous persons, all for fun and friendship. Everyone dressed for dinner on play nights and also for dinners welcoming writers such as Michael Arlen, H. G. Wells, P. G. Wodehouse, Emil Ludwig, Andre Maurois, Thomas Mann, James Hilton, Somerset Maugham and many others who previously had been only dazzling names to me. I was flattered when Rupert Hughes, the permanent president, invited me to join and astounded when, a year later, I was elected to the board. As I was only a reporter with five children I could hardly afford to belong to the club, but it was wonderful to meet a perpetual stream of famous writers, actors, directors, composers and whatnot on clubby terms, and the board meetings provided the most brilliant evenings of witty give and take imaginable. We always met at dinner, around a big round table. I was the only man there who was making less than $500 a week but I was the only one who could eat his dinner, and therefore was the most envied. Rupert would say:

"Just bring me a lettuce and tomato salad, but no dressing. I have brought my own in my vest pocket." Irvin Cobb would order only a raw apple and a glass of milk, though now and then Irvin would go on a reckless spree

of eating dangerously. William Slavens McNutt and Grover Jones, scenarists who worked together, each drew $2000 a week in salary, but both had to have very simple special plates. I was by far the least important person there but I am the only one still alive. Grover died at 46, Bill at 52.

When the annual election was due, Grover would invite the entire club to his home for dinner and feast us royally, but he still had a simple special plate. He had a guest house in which three or four out-of-work actors usually were housed and it was common for him to have 20 or more persons for dinner. His hobby was printing, and he had a separate building for that, housing some $40,000 worth of equipment. One day I complimented him on the beauty of the place and he grinned.

"It costs a lot to keep up," he said. I had never before heard him mention cost and was surprised. "That doesn't seem to worry you much," I said.

"N-no," he said. "But, do you know, it puts you under a strain when a producer says, 'Here's a million dollars. Go make a picture.' No matter what you have done before, you know that if you flop the rumor will start that you are all washed up."

A few months later Grover died. A few months after that his widow called on me and I could see she had been crying.

"Grover never carried insurance," she said. "He always urged me to buy anything I wanted. He lived so generously he had to borrow money, without telling me, when he went into the hospital. Just before the operation he told me: 'Honey, when I come out of this I want to see you all dressed up like a doll. Go out and buy some bright new clothes.' I went out and bought $800 worth, just to

please him—but he never came out of the operation. And now I learn he borrowed money and gave a chattel mortgage on our place, covering everything—even my jewelry and his printing plant. The bank is foreclosing."

Many of Hollywood's very rich were indebted to Grover and for several producers his genius had helped win high repute and important money. Courageous Susie Jones had converted Grover's hobby printing plant into a source of livelihood and had a contract to publish a house organ for Douglas Aircraft. All she wanted was a loan of one-tenth the value of the property secured by a mortgage on all except the printing plant, and I was sure that if that fact became known someone would leap to her aid. So I mentioned it in the *Los Angeles Times* and also got Walter Winchell to mention it in his syndicated column. All Winchell wrote was "The widow of Grover Jones, who made fortunes for several in Hollywood, is in financial difficulties. See Lee Shippey."

But that was enough. The bank gave her an extension of time which enabled her to sell the property for enough to clear the mortgage and have some working capital left. That incident, too, seemed to me to reveal Hollywood. Its impulses could be fantastically generous, but they could also be tragically fleeting.

Hollywood was—and is—such a place of rumors that when an Englishman named West joined the Writers someone idly wondered if he was related to Rebecca West and in a week rumor had it he was her brother. When he declined to claim such kinship he was credited with modesty and a sturdy desire to stand on his own feet, and was elected treasurer of the club. When he decamped with all the club's funds it was learned his

name was not West and Scotland Yard had been after him for years.

I was surprised to note that actors who rose from poverty to riches kept their heads much better than did authors and newspapermen who suddenly found their incomes multiplied. One friend of mine made $125 a week as a newspaperman—and that was pretty good during depression—but when he interviewed a movie magnate he made a suggestion the latter liked so much he gave him a one-year contract at $1000 a week. My friend immediately bought Pierce Arrows for himself and his wife, hired two chauffeurs and a secretary for his wife—the studio provided one for him—and rented an expensive residence. He gave a party so lavish one report said he had champagne in the fingerbowls, but that was exaggerated. It was true of only one fingerbowl and that was an accident. But the man didn't fit in, and at the end of his year he was turned off like a light. Six months later he was dropped from the club because he couldn't pay his dues.

Another newspaper friend was brought out from New York on a 12-week contract. He was so sure he was smarter than those stupid Hollywood magnates that he lived as if he had a 12-year contract. At the end of 12 weeks he was jobless and far in debt.

When a young author of great promise arrived I interviewed him and found him installed in a fine home complete with swimming pool, bar, butler and all that. His first picture was a success and for four years he drew high salaries. Then one day he called on me at my office, and wished to borrow $50. Hollywood had dropped him, thinking it had squeezed him dry, and he had saved nothing.

Nearly everyone in Hollywood who made $1000 a week pretended he got at least $1500, one who made $10,000 a week pretended he made "about $20,000," and so it went. All values were rated by the dollar mark. The studio that paid a star $30,000 a week bragged about it, sure it would make the public eager to see that star's next picture. Now Hollywood's press agents have become public relations counselors and, like Mr. Goldwyn with Mr. Shaw, they talk more about art than about money. Hollywood may be entering its finest hour, for it is no longer dazzled by its own glitter.

THE TRIGGER HAMLIN GARLAND pulled when he told me of his working habits fired a shot heard around the world, though it was far from loud.

I think that worth reporting, for it calls attention to one of the possible rewards—and responsibilities—of all who indulge in the printed word. Anything published may travel vast distances and affect the thinking of persons of whom the writer never dreamed. For the possible benefit of some reader who has never found time seriously to strive for what may be the thing for which he was created, let me tell how it happened.

All authors are supposed to have early struggles. I had an early struggle every time that alarm clock went off at six. But I got up, walked and pondered for half an hour, then shut myself in my den with my typewriter. I discarded my previous ideas of writing about romantic France or dramatic Mexico, and took Galsworthy's statement that character is the only story as my yardstick. I called to mind persons I had known, who had characteristics which had molded a brick in my philosophy. I could shut my eyes and see those persons, and that amused

me to wonder how they would react on one another if brought together in one small community.

Such imaginings became such a fascinating game that it seemed only a few minutes later when Madeleine called me to breakfast. I could hardly believe I had been in my den an hour. However, breakfast and the morning paper banished the vapors which had been assuming shapes in my mind, and the daily job of which our bread and butter depended kept them from returning all day. But next morning, when I took my walk, they came back to me out of the sun-silvered morning mist, and by the third day I began to write. In less than a year, one hour a day produced a ninety thousand word novel.

Good or bad, it was an achievement, something I had wanted to do for more than a quarter century but had never started, feeling I would not have time to finish. What was more, I liked it, whether anyone else would like it or not.

I sent the manuscript to a distinguished publisher. Then followed weeks of the silence of the tomb. At last a thin envelope came. I went to a secluded spot—the bathroom—to open it, and braced myself to meet defeat with a grin. But as I read, and reread the first paragraph I let out a whoop and kicked so high in a dance of joy that I almost shattered the shaving light, six feet above the floor. The novel had been accepted and a contract was on the way. As a columnist I was being read by some hundreds of thousands every day, but a book would be something enduring, not just something to read today and wrap a lunch in tomorrow.

The book appeared simultaneously with James Hilton's *Lost Horizon*. I had met Hilton two or three times and had joined most of the English-reading world in paying

tribute to *Mr. Chips,* but ruefully feared *Lost Horizon* would blanket my book as a big success often blankets a lesser effort. However, *Lost Horizon* charmed me so that I heartily wished great success to it, and when I met Hilton at the club one day I went up to welcome him, as he came only now and then, as a guest.

"I've been wanting to see you," he said, before I could say anything. "I like your book very much. How is it doing in England?"

"I'm flattered to know you found time to read it," I said. "As for England, it hasn't been published over there."

"It should be. Of course, it's purely Californian. But *Mr. Chips* was purely British. We should be as much interested in you as you are in us." He had not yet become an American citizen.

I was a little stunned.

"You really read it—clear through?" I laughed.

"Indeed yes. If you don't mind, I'd like to recommend it to a publisher friend in London."

I could hardly believe such generosity.

"I certainly won't get out an injunction to stop you," I laughed.

I still thought it was just Hollywood luncheon conversation. If half the things which are promised over Hollywood luncheon tables were done this would be a happier world. But next day I received from Hilton a note inclosing another note to George Harrap, Ltd., London publisher. "If the inclosure is all right," Hilton's note to me said, "seal it and send it on."

The letter to Harrap said that Hilton was asking me to send him a copy of my novel. *Where Nothing Ever Happens,* adding that Hilton liked it and believed Harrap would too.

I sent Harrap a copy of the book, though it seemed too much to hope that my first effort would succeed on both sides of the Atlantic. No matter how little chance it had, I loved Jimmy Hilton for that wholly voluntary gesture. I never would have thought of suggesting such an act of generous friendship, and it would be a memory in itself worth more than gold.

We became good friends and the more I learned of him the more I liked his frank simplicity and unassuming bigness. He told me he had written twelve other books before *Mr. Chips*, and none had set the world afire. But he had faith that if one kept doing his best sooner or later something big would happen. He had not written *Mr. Chips* for a book but only as a magazine novelette of eighteen thousand words. He was in England when it was published in the magazine and received a cable offering an advance of two hundred fifty dollars on a contract to publish it as a book. He did not believe a book of only eighteen thousand words would succeed, and offered to sell the book rights outright for five hundred dollars. The publisher cabled back that he would give the five hundred advance, but would also pay the standard Authors League contract royalty.

I had often sourly smiled at Ambrose Bierce's quip that publishers are fellows who drink champagne out of the skulls of authors, but I think that publisher comes closer to the general standard. If the publisher had accepted Hilton's own offer the author would have lost far more than most authors make in their entire careers. The book and the motion picture made from it must have brought the author far more than a hundred thousand dollars instead of a mere five hundred dollars, and even

the ghost of Ambrose Bierce should give publishers a good mark for integrity on that.

The dazzling success of *Mr. Chips*, the unlucky thirteenth of Hilton's books, made the publishers thoughtfully rub their chins. Hilton's twelfth book, which had been almost overlooked by the public, had greatly impressed a few perceptive critics. The publishers decided to bring it out again, as his fourteenth book.

It struck me as tragic that such a fine piece of work could have come so close to being overlooked by the great public. Had it not been for the success of *Mr. Chips* that book, *Lost Horizon*, never would have been republished, and Shangri-la would never have become a world famous name. Even *Mr. Chips* might never have created a great stir had not Alexander Woollcott, on a national hookup, hailed it as a literary pure delight.

Still, even if books were as numerous as grains in a wheat field, if a man or a stalk of wheat does not produce the thing he or it was created to produce there might be famine in the world, for man cannot live by master works alone. I was glad I had produced my grain of wheat, and it was wholesome wheat, fit to be absorbed by whoever included it in his staff of life.

To my delighted surprise, the London publisher liked the book as much as Hilton had liked it. Besides that, the London publisher had branch offices in Johannesburg, Alexandria, India, Australia and New Zealand, and friendly reviews of my before-breakfast novel came in from all the way around the world. It was astonishing, too, for the *Rand Daily Mail* of Johannesburg, the *Times* of India and the *Sydney Sun* to comment, though each expressed it in a different way, that anyone familiar with village characters could recognize the characters in my

California story. That seemed evidence of a certain human touch, and I felt that, in a small way, the things in which I believed had pleasantly rippled the consciousness of the entire English-speaking world.

Now, looking back on 50 years as columnist and occasional author, it seems to me that, though I am a most ordinary fellow, I am the luckiest man alive. As a columnist I have been able somewhat to brighten the lives of tens of thousands of readers daily. As an author I have five novels and five nonfiction books, not counting this one, to my credit, and librarians tell me two of my historical studies may be valuable to researchers a century hence. None of those books is great, but each is a wholesome grain of wheat.

I have come to serene faith in the goodness of humanity in general, as proved by the fact that the cry of "Man overboard!" makes all who hear it eager to save the man in danger, without asking who he is nor what his color. I am sure that in such a world anyone who does his best with what nature has given him can live happily and achieve a good deal, no matter what his handicaps.

I have received thousands of letters from persons who were touched, encouraged or wholesomely amused by things I have written. I have also been able to call helpful attention to the heroic struggles of many gifted or tragically afflicted persons. I carry a wallet made for me by a blind girl who was in most pitiful plight. I wrote a paragraph which cost me nothing but which caused much better persons than I am to telephone to learn her name and how they could help her, and in two days she was launched on a new and happy career. That was one case in many.

I am glad of all those things, but my greatest pride and happiness comes from the fact that all my children are fond of one another and so are all those they married, and we are proud of all of them. Even our twelve grandchildren act like devoted brothers and sisters. Such mutual respect and affection makes life wonderfully sweet and good for all of us. I would like to claim credit for that great and rare blessing, but the fact is that Madeleine has a gift for binding a family together, her constant letters keeping them all interested in one another.

I can't be sure I'm the luckiest man alive, but I know a great many persons and think I am the luckiest one I know. I am sorry for many who are a thousand times as prosperous as I am, some because they can never have enough, some because the burdens of what they have are crushing them into early graves, some because too much of everything has robbed them of keen appetites for anything, some because they are fearful of what their wealth and special privilege may do to their children and some because the preoccupation with gain has made them lose touch with all the better things of life. I have been able to do what I wished to do and live as I wished to live. I have a house full of good books and a world full of good friends. And I think I can live out my days in modest comfort.

It is only through our appreciations that we live. Without them we would be mere clods, even if wealthy and powerful clods. The man who can appreciate kindness, generosity, courage, faith and beauty is very rich. I am lucky because, ever since blindness cleared my inner vision, I have reveled in an inspiring wealth of appreciation of the wonderful world I live in and the wonderful persons I know.

Recently I tried to sum up the profits and losses of my life, with this result:

A hundred times I've tried and failed,
And some have laughed, and some have railed.
Some threw me crumbs of sympathy
And two or three have wept for me.
But I look back, almost with pride,
Though I am far from satisfied,
For I have come a goodly way
And helped to make the journey gay
For many folk. And very few
Have had to share the griefs I knew.

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